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ESSAY

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In search of the  
border

## The gangster regime we fund

**EXCLUSIVE**

Andrew Gumbel

Western governments have failed to heed clear warnings from their intelligence services that the Albanian government is deeply involved in organised crime rackets.

According to a number of intelligence sources from different countries contacted by *The Independent*, classified documents have circulated in Western capitals for the last two years citing evidence of collusion and active participation by members of the ruling Democratic Party, including government ministers, in drugs trafficking, illegal arms trading and, until the end of the war in Bosnia, large-scale sanctions-busting via oil sales to Serbia and Montenegro.

Yet the West, and Europe in particular, has pursued a policy of almost unconditional support for President Sali Berisha and his government. With the country now sliding into anarchy as a result of the collapse of a series of steady pyramid investment schemes, the belief that Mr Berisha could provide stability in one corner of the Balkans has been shattered and the West must now ask itself why it did not see the débâcle coming.

"I find it amazing that nobody has blown the lid on what has been going on in Albania because it is truly mind-boggling," one intelligence source said. "We have been passing this stuff on but nobody in government wants to know."

Politicians in France, Germany and Italy have continued to praise President Berisha in public as a man committed to peace, free markets and the democratic process. Britain established full diplomatic relations with Albania last year, and in January, the Foreign Secretary, visiting the capital, Tirana, made the charge d'affaires, Andrew Gumbel, Ambassador Mr Berisha paid a tribute to John Major during the Foreign Secretary's visit and declared: "I want to thank all British taxpayers for their aid to my country."

Mr Berisha's Democratic Party is even allied to the Conservative Party through membership of the European Democratic Union, a grouping of centre-right parties.

But intelligence services have been reporting unambiguously that Albania has turned into a repressive, one-party state, where corruption is the rule at all levels and a largely gangster-based economy is under the strict clandestine control of the ruling party.

Drugs barons from Kosovo, the Albanian-dominated region controlled by Serbia, operate in Albania with impunity, and much of the transportation of heroin and other drugs across Albania, from Macedonia and Greece en route to Italy, is believed to be organised by Shik, the state security police, in conjunction with police in the countries with which Albania shares a border.

Intelligence agents are convinced the chain of command in the rackets goes all the way to the top and have had no hesitation in naming ministers in their reports. One minister suspected of direct involvement in running the drugs racket has been dropped from the government, but another accused of abusing his position to transport illicit goods is still in office.

During the war in Bosnia the company that enjoyed a monopoly on the import and export of oil was run directly by the Democratic Party and chaired by its chief, Tritan Shehu, now the Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister.

Intelligence sources further allege that Shqiponja, a company run openly by the DP, was used to run guns and drugs, and these rackets are continuing in other forms.

The pyramid schemes - the various pseudo-banks that succeeded in sucking in funds from almost every Albanian household with the promise of exorbitant interest payments before going bust - also have the government's fingerprints all over them. Two weeks ago, *The Independent* reported suspicions that the schemes were buoyed up by the influx of funds from organised crime and used for money-laundering.

The biggest of all the schemes, run by Albania's largest private company Vefa Holdings, is identified closely with the government and has lavishly funded the DP's election campaigns. It is also under investigation in Italy for ties to the Mafias of Sicily, Calabria and Puglia.

For the first time this week, allegations of criminal activity behind the pyramid schemes has been alleged in public by Western officials. Pitr Luigi Vigna, Italy's chief anti-Mafia prosecutor, examined a report by a small business association that Italian organised crime groups had sunk money into the schemes to raise start-up capital for new ventures. He noted that Albania had become a significant producer of marijuana and was dabbling in the cultivation of coca, the raw material for cocaine.

None of these allegations came as a surprise to ordinary Albanians who have long since lost faith in the decency of their political system and have relied on the endemic corruption in the country to haul themselves out of poverty through various private means. If a million people sank hard-earned foreign currency into the pyramid schemes, it was part-

I want to thank all British taxpayers for their aid to my country — Albania's President Sali Berisha



Albanians living in a state of anarchy on a street in Tirana, capital of Albania, which is sliding into anarchy as a result of shady pyramid investment schemes. Photograph: Elgo Paoli

ly on a calculated assumption that the government was underwriting the operations with dirty money.

President Berisha and his government have been deeply unpopular for more than two years as their reputation as champions of democracy and free markets has been tarnished by increasing repression against the political opposition, the independent media and the institutions of state, starting with the judiciary, which have been purged of anti-government voices.

General elections held last May were denounced at home and abroad as invalid because of widespread vote-rigging and intimidation witnessed by international monitors from the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe. Albania has been a de facto one-party state ever since. Local elections held in October were almost certainly rigged as well.

Since the outbreak a month ago of rioting connected to the collapse of the pyramid schemes, there have been waves of mass arrests and reports of beatings in custody. Tirana, the capital, is awash with secret service agents and intellectuals and opposition figures have been attacked at random.

## Boeing superjet in safety probe

**EXCLUSIVE**

Michael Hamesh  
Transport Correspondent

An investigation has been launched into the new generation of superjet used by British Airways after one of the aircraft's engines began to roll mysteriously and had to return to Heathrow.

The Air Accidents Investigation Board, the Government's safety adviser, is investigating the incident involving the £60m Boeing 777 after a team from the plane's manufacturers spent a week examining the jet, but failed to reach a conclusion.

The BA flight 133, which was carrying 85 passengers to Jeddah in Saudi Arabia, was forced to return to Heathrow airport after being in the air for a little over two hours when the aircraft started rolling mysteriously at 39,000ft last October.

The cabin crew was alerted by a passenger to a window noticed that the wing tips seemed to be moving randomly. When the aircraft returned to the flight deck, he was unable to understand the actions of the aircraft's computer.

In its mandatory occurrence report to the Civil Aviation Authority, the airline said that a "manual landing [was] carried out... large rudder inputs required."

A team of Boeing engineers spent a week examining the aircraft and questioning the cabin crew but were unable to explain the incident. Parts were also tested in Boeing's headquarters in Seattle, but technicians could not explain the jet's random movements.

British Airways said that it was now monitoring its fleet of 777s.

Sophisticated: The Boeing 777 uses cutting-edge technology

777s. "Safety is paramount for our customers. Our initial conclusion is that the roll was caused by rudder movement," said a spokesman for the airline.

The 777 is considered one of the most sophisticated in the world. It uses the latest fly-by-wire technology.

Produced by Boeing a little over three years ago, British Airways ordered 15 immediately and have an option to buy another 15 - an order worth £2m.

Once on the ground, the aircraft's black box flight recorder revealed that the movement was caused by "uncommanded" rudder movements which the aircraft's sophisticated flight computer had tried to rectify by using the flaps on the wings.

Errant rudder movements have sparked a controversial debate in the aircraft world. Last month, Washington ordered airlines around the world to fit newly developed rudder systems in 2,800 Boeing 737s.

The changes were prompted by two unexplained crashes in the United States, which claimed more than 150 lives. Investigators suspect that they were caused by extreme rudder movements.

Safety campaigners said they were "concerned" by the investigation. "Boeing were made to carry out changes on the 737s, but only after the US government acted. Will they now act on the 777?" said William Beckett, who lost his daughter in the Manchester disaster in 1985 and chairs a safety pressure group set up soon afterwards.

Boeing says that the company has been unable to replicate the "unusual" situation. "There have been no other occurrences of the incident by BA or any other 777 operator around the world," said a company spokeswoman.

**QUICKLY**

**Lawrence appeal**  
The family of murdered black teenager Stephen Lawrence said they were planning civil action for damages against white youths suspected of his stabbing. They appealed for help from witnesses. **Page 5**

**Ulster on alert**  
Security forces in Northern Ireland were on alert following the IRA killing of a soldier in South Armagh on Wednesday, which produced a wave of condemnation in Britain and Ireland and increased fears of a fresh spiral of violence. **Page 5**

**Unionist rescue**  
David Trimble, the Ulster Unionist leader, gave a clear signal that his party would save the Government from defeat when Labour brings its censure motion on Monday. Labour privately discounted defeating the Government. **Page 6**

**Windfall promise**  
Labour's new windfall tax, which is expected to "comfortably" raise at least £3m, would form part of Gordon Brown's first Budget. **Page 12**

**Grobelaar 'ploy'**  
Goalkeeper Bruce Grobelaar told a court that he "played along" with his former business partner, Christopher Vincent, to find out who was behind a plot to fix games. **Page 9**

**Fallen hero**  
Revered Israeli military leader Gen Moshe Dayan looted archaeological sites and territories conquered by the Israeli army. He got away with it because he was a national hero who could do no wrong. **Page 13**

## Crime Bill teeters after Lords defeat

Frank Abrams  
Political Correspondent

Ministers plans to impose minimum sentences on persistent offenders were in disarray last night after peers inflicted a crushing defeat on the Government in the House of Lords.

Opposition amendments to give flexibility to judges were carried by just eight votes after the Home Secretary warned that the move would "drive a coach and horses" through the Crime Bill.

Last night, the Home Office confirmed that Michael Howard would attempt to repair his Bill in the House of Commons. The move may leave him exposed to a further revolt from some Conservative backbenchers who are known to be unhappy about the measures.

The Bill imposes compulsory sentences of seven years on third-time drug dealers and of three years on third-time burglars as well as imposing life sentences on second-time violent and sexual offenders. It allows discretion for judges in exceptional circumstances, but peers from both sides of the house argued that it was too narrow.

"They voted 180 to 122 for an amendment which would allow judges to impose shorter sentences on burglars and drug dealers if they felt circumstances demanded it."

Among those who opposed the Government in the Lords yesterday were the former Minister of the Rolls, Lord Donaldson and the Lord Chief Justice, Lord Bingham. Lord Hailsham, a Tory Lord Chancellor, also voted against the Government.

Lord Bingham defied his opponents to find a criminal justice system that worked better than the British one.

"All we are asking is for the courts to be able to decline to pass sentences which are against their professional or moral consciences. Surely that isn't asking too much," he said.

Labour home affairs spokesman in the Lords, Lord McIntosh of Haringey, said a huge variety of offences would be covered by the measures.

"Many burglars are pathetic losers, many dealers are themselves addicts who need treatment rather than lengthy prison sentences," he said.

However, Home Office minister Baroness Blatch said the amendments would wreck the Bill. They would allow judges to make exceptions in all cases if they wanted, she said.

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## people



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# Museum finds that money is no object

Visitors undeterred by introduction of £5 charge

David Lister  
Arts News Editor

Attendances at the Victoria and Albert Museum have actually increased since it controversially introduced compulsory charges last autumn, figures obtained by *The Independent* show.

The increase in visitors threatens the argument advanced by arts campaigners, the Labour Party and several major museums that charging frightens people away.

Only last week, Tony Blair, the Labour Party leader, expressed his concern about the V & A charging. Key figures in the museums world, including the directors of the British Museum and National Gallery, have repeatedly spoken out against charging, and warned

that attendances would inevitably decline.

The V & A attendance figures have not been publicised by the museum authorities. But insiders are struck that there has been no decline in attendances, and the public has not shared the hostility of the professionals to charging.

The V & A's success may now bring further pressure on the British Museum to introduce admission charges. After much public debate last year, the museum's trustees ruled against charging for the time being. The directors and trustees of the National and Tate Galleries have ruled out charging, but the Science, Natural History and Imperial War Museums all now charge for admission to supplement their government grant.

In his first speech on the arts, Tony Blair joined the clamour against the V & A charging admission, saying: "We are concerned about the introduction of admissions charges in national museums. The evidence suggests that high charges can lead to a big decline in attendance."

The figures, however, show that since charges were introduced at the beginning of October last year, weekly visitor numbers have either remained steady or gone up. For most of September, while voluntary charges were in force, weekly attendances hovered around the 18,000 mark. In November, they never fell below 20,000. In the last week of the Christmas holidays they were 25,000, one of the highest of the year. The



Pulling power: The number of visitors to the V & A has actually gone up since charges came in

total for 1996 was 1.27 million, compared with 1.22 million for 1995.

Key comparisons show that the total number of attendances for January 1996 (with voluntary

charges) were 82,974. Last month, with compulsory £5 charges, the figures rose to 85,653. With the initial publicity over admission charges, the figures for October 1996 were

27,000 down on the same month for 1995, but they immediately bounced back in November with a 3,000 jump on the 1995 figure.

The rise in figures is not

even distorted by the museum hosting any blockbusters or major temporary exhibitions. The main exhibition of last year, the William Morris exhibition, ended in September.

In addition, the museum's own private research among visitors shows that only a tiny minority shared the campaigners' worries on charging. Less than 5 per cent of visitors complained about having to pay for entry, while large numbers voiced concern about non-financial matters such as how big the typeface was on labels or how clean the lavatories were.

Looking back over the years, admission to the V & A was at its highest when it was completely free with 1.6 million in 1984, the year before voluntary donations were introduced; it fell to 900,000 in 1990, rose to 1.4 million in 1994 and was 1.27 million last year. Even the

1.6 million high in 1994 cannot be taken as a wholly accurate figure as attendance figures were only estimated before the introduction of charging.

The V & A introduced a compulsory admission charge of £5 last October with a concessionary rate of £3 and annual season tickets for £15. They balanced this with a number of exempt groups to counter the argument that poorer and younger people would be put off by having to pay. Everyone under 18 is allowed in free as are pre-booked education groups, disabled people and their carers and UB40 holders. There is a universal free entrance between 4.30 and 6pm every afternoon.

When the decision was announced, the museum came in for much criticism. Julian Spalding, director of Glasgow Museums, called it "a diminution of a great tradition".

## Valentine's Day makes burning issue for lovers' hearts

Jojo Moyes

British women's idea of a romantic evening is sharing a bottle of wine in front of the fire, according to one of the latest batch of Valentine's surveys, which show that as 14 February dawns, Britain is latching onto ever-more far-fetched ways of exploiting the most romantic—or disappointing—day of the year.

It is unlikely that the words "romance" and "smokeless fuels" have often been uttered in the same breath. But the Coalite company lit on Valentine's day as an excuse to advertise its range of smokeless stoves. "What is the most romantic thing you can do in front of a real fire?"

Unsurprisingly, four out of 10 people said it was making love. Furthermore, 44 per cent of men and 37 per cent of women claim to have already done so.

The next most popular fire-side activities were sharing wine and chocolates, cuddling, toasting a crumpet, and watching television or a video. Nine per cent claimed to prefer an undisturbed "other", while 4 per cent "didn't know".

Meanwhile, dispelling the notion that women are turned off by hot air, a survey published

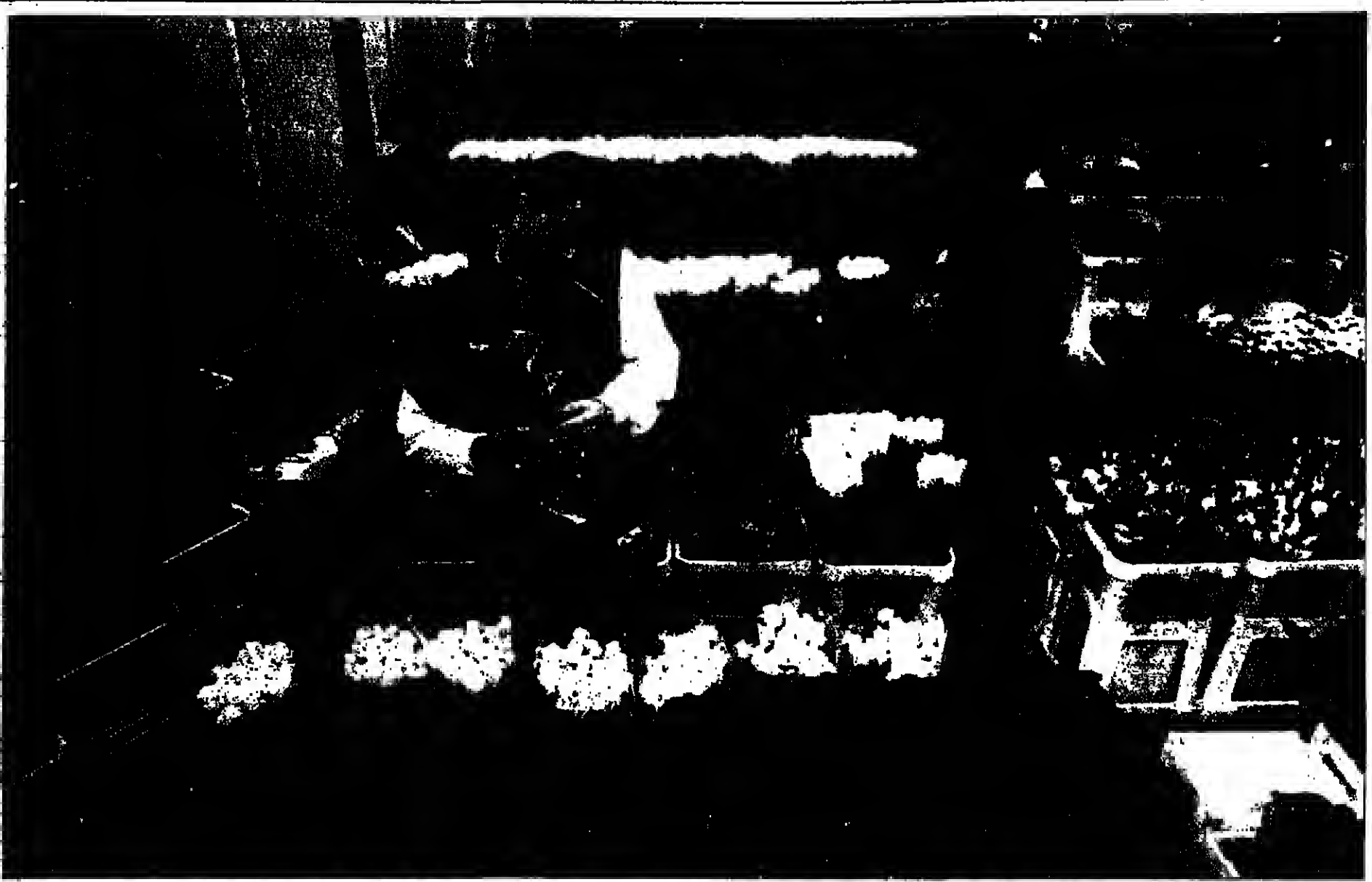
to celebrate the 25th anniversary of *Cosmopolitan* magazine placed the ginger-bearded entrepreneur Richard Branson second only to actor Sean Bean as its readers' "ideal man".

He was followed by footballer Alan Shearer, actor Jean-Claude Van Damme and Paul McCartney. Comedians David Baddiel and Jim Carrey took sixth and seventh place, followed by actor Kenneth Branagh, television doctor Hilary Jones and, finally, Oasis star Liam Gallagher.

Meanwhile, the Internet offered numerous websites for people who preferred to substitute Roms for roses and declare their passions via the silver screen. *Wired* inspired the CD-Rom *Capital's Love Note*, and, for those who forgot, *Mark's Apology Note Generator*.

For a slightly more personal, if noisier touch, town crier Graham Vedmore offered himself to deliver Valentine's marriage proposals for lovers. For a small fee, the 42-year-old from Cardiff also offered to bellow out Valentine's Day love poems.

And even the environmental campaigners Friends of the Earth got in on the act, by proposing a few tips for green lovers. They included saving on



Roses all the way: A trader at New Covent Garden market in Nine Elms, south London, anticipating brisk business supplying Valentine's Day tributes. Photograph: David Rose

energy by spending the day in bed together, bathing or showering with a friend and, for those with a sense of "adventure", using recycled handkerchiefs that had finished duty chaining road protesters to diggers.

But some organisations yesterday offered a more solemn approach to the increasing hysteria. The marriage guidance charity Relate issued a warning to couples on the most romantic day of the year, stressing that "love is for life, not just for Valentine's Day". The organi-

sation is launching three sobering courses to coincide with Valentine's Day - on love and marriage, on anger management and, finally, on surviving the break-up.

And, perhaps mirroring many people's experience of the

day, a St Valentine's ball arranged for a group of teenagers had to be cancelled - due to a lack of interest from the boys. More than 50 girls applied for tickets for a dance to be held at Owlbury parish hall near Winchester in Hampshire,

in aid of the Samaritans, but the organisers received no applications at all from any boys.

The dance was due to take place on 15 February, and it was hoped it would raise at least £1,000 for Winchester Samaritans to help renew a vital tele-

phone system. Audrey Brunt, chairman of the Friends of the Samaritans, said: "The cancellation is obviously a disappointment - but you can't have a teenage Valentine's ball without boys."

The Tabloid

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## politics

## PRIME MINISTER'S QUESTIONS

SCORING THE EXCHANGES

John Major  
3/10

Major deserves credit for straightforwardly answering one of Blair's four specific questions (about the second time of asking). For the rest of the time he resorted to squaring Blair's criticism of the Government with criticism of British beef.

Tony Blair  
6/10

Blair put Major on the spot with his questions on beef. After that, he only had to point out that Major didn't want to answer them. He justifiably reminded Major that BSE has been said to stand for "blame someone else" - on this occasion, Labour.

## THEMES OF THE DAY

- The effect of state subsidies within the EU (John Wilkinson, C, Rutland Northwood)
- The state of the nation and need for a general election (Paddy Ashdown)
- The unemployment figures (David Marshall, Lab, Glasgow, Shettleston)
- The Conservative and Labour parties (Stephen Day, C, Chisle)

## BLAIR'S ATTACK

Given the subject of Monday's censure motion, Major might have expected Blair to attack on beef. Blair asked him to confirm that neither the promised end of the European ban nor the start of selective slaughter had yet come about, and that the cost of the BSE crisis has been £3.3bn. Major blamed "Hartie Haman", Labour's former spokeswoman on health, for "a very substantial part" of the damage caused by the BSE crisis.

## GOOD DAY



Dennis Skinner beckoned Major to the opposition benches, where "I have been keeping this seat warm. He named his vision in which a defeated Major had to 'vote for one of those Tory bastards' (Radwood, Portillo or Howard) in a leadership contest.

## BAD DAY



Stephen Day christened Labour "the pale pink imitation over there" and Major, "the real thing". That is expected to be one of the Conservative election themes.

## THE QUIP OF THE DAY

Marshall alleged that an employment minister had admitted: "only half of the fall in unemployment figures are genuine". He mused: "which half of these figures are we to believe?"

## THE UNANSWERED QUESTION

Ashdown listed Britain's problems, and asked: "When will the Prime Minister... call the [election] day? When will he get on with it?" Major concentrated on the list, not the question.

## THE CREEP OF THE DAY

Alan Haselhurst (C, Sutton Walden) asked the customary question about "a windfall tax on energy suppliers leaving consumers possibly worse off".

Compiled by Ben Summers



In step: Douglas Hogg leaving Downing Street yesterday after receiving the backing of the Cabinet in his bid to defeat Labour's censure motion. Photograph: Nicola Kurtz

## Ulster MPs set to save Major in beef debate

Colin Brown and Anthony Bevis

David Trimble, leader of the Ulster Unionists, last night gave a clear signal that his party will save the Government from defeat in Monday's crunch vote in the Commons when he said he was "irritated" by the lack of consultation over Labour's tactics.

Senior shadow cabinet ministers privately discounted the chance of inflicting defeat on the Government, with at least two of the nine Ulster Unionist MPs expected to be away from the vote, but Labour insisted it was right to force John Major on to the defensive.

Tony Blair has decided to launch an attack over the "mad cow" crisis because he believes that it is John Major's biggest weak spot. "He thinks it is Major's poll tax," a leadership source said last night.

Agriculture Minister Douglas Hogg, who was in confident mood yesterday after getting the backing of the Cabinet, will open the debate for the Government. "We are going to win," he told colleagues. "I am looking forward to it."

Mr Major will go on to the offensive against Labour next Thursday in a Commons debate on constitutional reform, which he believes is Mr Blair's Achilles' heel.

The Labour leader in the Commons challenged Mr Major over the fact that the beef export ban had not been lifted, as promised, last November and that not a single animal had been slaughtered under the selective cull scheme.

He also pointed out that Britain had not yet put a formal proposal to Brussels about lifting the export ban for BSE-free herds in Scotland and Northern Ireland, and that the fiasco had already cost £3.3bn.

The Prime Minister retali-



United they stand: John Major and David Trimble



were going to do it," Mr Trimble said. "It was more than a little irritating that they failed to consult us."

The Government could bring forward proposals for a Northern Ireland grand committee to vet legislation in the Commons, meeting a key Ulster Unionist demand, but sources said it was more likely to be held in reserve for a later confidence vote, if the Tories lose heavily in the Welsh South by-election.

Mr Trimble was annoyed that the plan to force a censure motion was not raised when he met Mo Mowlam, the Labour spokeswoman on Northern Ireland, on Wednesday morning for talks about Labour's approach to policing the marching season in Ulster. Ms Mowlam sent Mr Trimble a message yesterday making it clear she also was not aware of the plan until shortly before it was agreed by the Shadow Cabinet.

The Liberal Democrats were also irritated at not being consulted. A source said: "We are going to vote with Labour but we are not busting a gut to get everyone here."

A number of Ulster Unionist MPs will be away for the vote, including the party's agriculture spokesman Willie Ross, who is in New Zealand. The vote clashes with a BSE debate in the European Parliament, which could force Ian Paisley, who is also an MEP, to miss the vote. John Taylor said he had a constituency event, and Martin Smyth, the UUP whip, made it clear he was unlikely to vote against the Government.

The reluctance of Mr Trimble to commit his force of nine MPs to vote against the Government underlines the difficulty Tony Blair faces in trying to bring down the Government before Mr Major's preferred election date of 1 May.

Leading article, page 17  
Commentary, page 19

## Police warning on sex offenders

Jason Bennetto  
Crime Correspondent

Police chiefs are opposing moves to alert neighbours of the presence of sex offenders in their community despite attempts by Labour, and possibly the Government, to introduce new anti-paedophile laws.

The Association of Chief Police Officers (ACPO) has warned Michael Howard, the Home Secretary, that telling communities that a sex criminal has moved into the neighbourhood would be counter-productive and place children at greater risk. Opposition by chief officers would be a stumbling block to any new legislation.

Mr Howard told a conference last Tuesday that he was considering introducing community notification of paedophiles. Labour has already tabled an amendment to the Sex Offenders Bill calling for the controlled disclosure of names and addresses of convicted sex offenders to child-protection workers, schools and in some cases members of the public.

But following a survey of the 43 police forces in England and Wales, chief constables have come out against greater disclosure. They say that warning neighbours will merely drive sex offenders underground and could lead to vigilante action. The Home Secretary said that the police already warn probation officers and the social services and carry out surveillance operations on offenders considered dangerous.

Tony Butler, Chief Constable of Gloucestershire and ACPO spokesman on children-protection and sex-offender issues, said: "What is the point of telling residents? This could lead to picketing of homes or houses being burnt down. Sex offenders are some of the most devious individuals who will not sit around if they are identified. They will change their names and identity. I would rather know where these people are so that the police can keep track of them."

A Bill now going through Parliament sets up a national register of sex offenders, enabling the police to track the movements of convicted paedophiles and rapists.

DAVID Aaronovitch

## Locking horns over thorny issue

Stormy weather. So febrile is the Westminster atmosphere, that even the divine Dame Peggy Fenner - who once used to grace the benches with her imperious (and, I think, impenetrable) calm, as though sitting for a still-life - has begun to gesticulate and point at the Opposition during the shanty bits.

But things were calm when Tony Banks (Lab, Newham NW), a true friend to animals everywhere and Chelsea fan, asked the Treasury minister and VC heart-throb Philip Oppenheim, about the world trade in powdered rhino horn. Mr Oppenheim - unique among ministers - chose not to speculate on how many rhinos would be likely to die if there were a minimum wage. Instead he laid into the Chinese, who dominate this illegal commerce. He thought it "paradoxical", he said, "that the most populous nation on earth seems intent on wiping out the rhino, simply because some of their menfolk are incapable of per-forming."

It was unfortunate that this punchy reply was still being digested when Harry Greenway (C, Ealing North) got up to ask a supplementary. Mr Greenway is, in his way, a living embodiment of political impotence. It is not that the member fails to rise; he does, and often. Nor is there a problem with achieving a climax; a noisy one is practically guaranteed. It is simply that he reminds everyone of how ridiculous the act can be when performed in a particular way. His (doubtless important) intervention was lost amid ribald laughter.

But Mr Greenway is a reminder that most MPs need no artificial stimulation to get them aroused. The game of Synthetic Indignation being played by ministers and their supporters yesterday was about the windfall tax, and its horrible impact upon pensioners, small shareholders and the almost extinct white rhino. Michael Jack, the Financial Secretary, responding to a series of name questions from his pals, used the word "cynical" no less than six times to describe Labour's Gordon Brown. It reminded me that earlier I had heard Michael Howard suggesting that Labour was "cynical and opportunistic" - a trace of admiration clearly detectable in his voice.

On the benches opposite, however, Labour was giving as good as it got. The two-tone shadow Chief Secretary, Alistair Darling, raised his black eyebrows from underneath his white hair (a characteristic he shares with Morticia Addams and - more gruesomely - Norman Lamont) and accused Mr Jack of being more keen on "jumping into bed with the boardroom fat-cats". A nice piece of hysterical scansion, if ever I heard one.

Then the pale, slightly squat Angela Eagle, dressed all in scarlet, and looking like the eponymous terminator from *Attack of the Killer Tomatoes*, asked Ken Clarke (in the tinkly little, acidic voice that you imagine a killer tomato might have) exactly how many times Value Added Tax had been increased or levied since 1979? It was a gooey shot, and Ken Clarke looked pained.

Labour has other ways, however, of keeping its pecker up. Morale was also being maintained by the toothsome Jane Kennedy (Lab, Liverpool Broadgreen). Ms Kennedy, a whip, has realised what many commentators have forgotten: that a large number of Labour MPs are not soft southern sophisticates, but Northern men of mature years - men who would not look out of place in a crowd scene from *Last Of The Summer Wine*.

Ms Kennedy weaves her spells simply by sitting next to one of the dear old chaps, smiling at them, passing a kind word - and then moving on. It works a treat. David Winnick grins, William O'Brien blushes, Peter Hardy glows. All are happy - and it's so much cheaper than rhino horn.

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# Ps set Major debate

were going to do it," Mr. the said. "It was more the irritating that they consult us."

The Government could forward proposals for the new Ireland grand committee legislation in the coming meeting of key Ulster loyalists, but some were more likely to be served for a later date, if the Tories lose in the Wirral South by-election.

Mr Trimble was saying the plan to force a coalition was not raised when Mo Mowlam, the spokeswoman on Northern Ireland, on Wednesday talks about Labour's approach to policing the murders in Ulster. Mr Mowlam Trimble a message, making it clear she was aware of the plan until before it was agreed in Shadow Cabinet.

The Liberal Democrats also irritated at the suggestion. A source said: "We are not busing everyone here."

A number of Ulsterist MPs will be over in New Zealand, including the party's spokesman, Willie Ross. He clashes with a BSE case in the European Parliament could force Ian Paisley also an MEP to attend John Taylor said he is a constituency event, and Smith, the UUP said, clear he was unlikely against the Government.

The reluctance of the MPs to commit his MPs to vote against the government underlines the difficulty Tony Blair faces to bring down the Government. Mr Major's election date of 1998.

Leading article  
Commentary

## ovitch

### ing horns horny issue

the divine Dame Peggy Four the benches with her impenetrable calm, as they began to gesticulate and peep about his.

when Tony Banks (Lab.) to everyone here and Old and "VC" heart-throb the world trade in power - unique among many - how many rhinos would minimum wage.

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that this punchy reply was of the way (C. L. along North Mr Greenaway, in his usual importance. It is not the done, and often Nor is the a volume, a noisy one is put that he reminds everyone of the when performed in a room (important) intervention was his

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only equal Angela Eagle, dressed like the enormous tentacles of the Tamara, asked Ken Clarke voice that you imagine the exactly how many times the and he leaved since 1992? It was (Clarke looked) pulled, says, however, of keeping in the being maintained by the (Liverpool Broadcasting) At the what many commentators have number of Labour MPs are in, but Northern men of money and out of place in a crowd of

her spells simply by sitting down, smiling at them, and playing on. It works a treat, from the Black Panthers, Peter Hain, it's as much cheaper than

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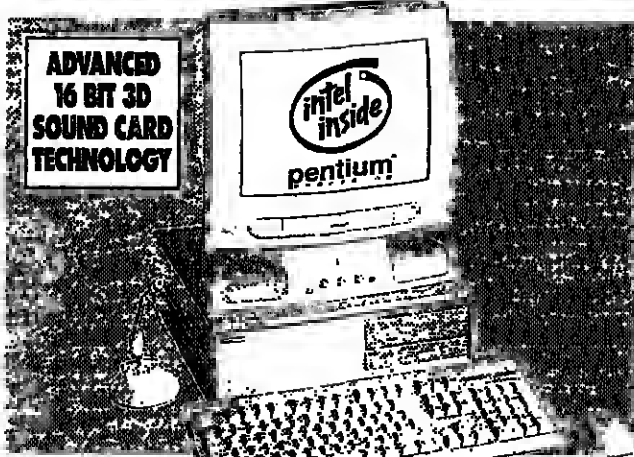
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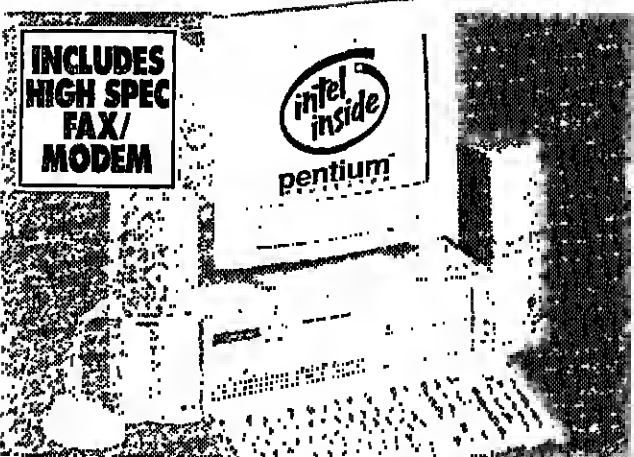
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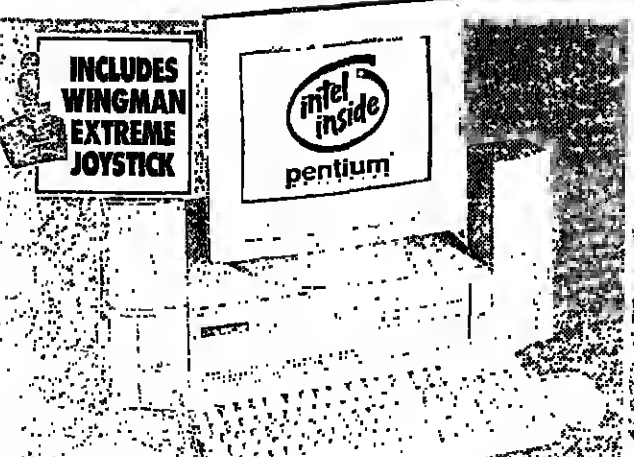
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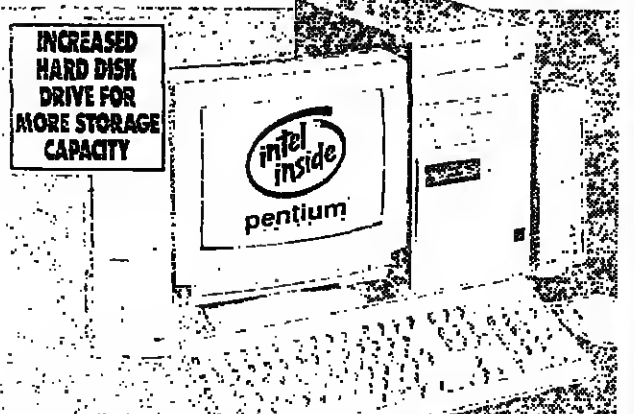
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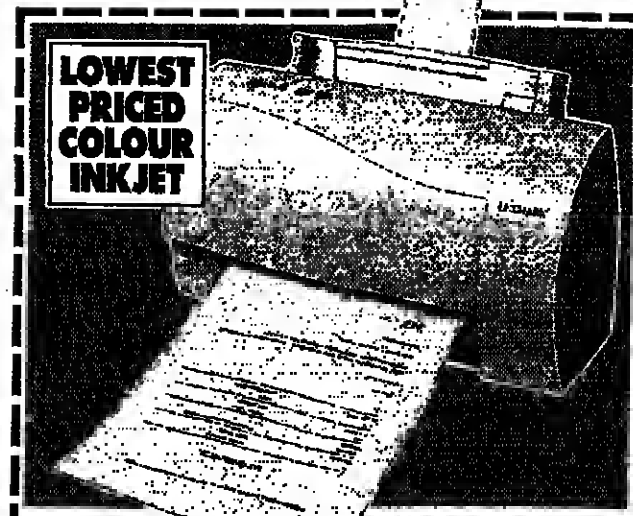
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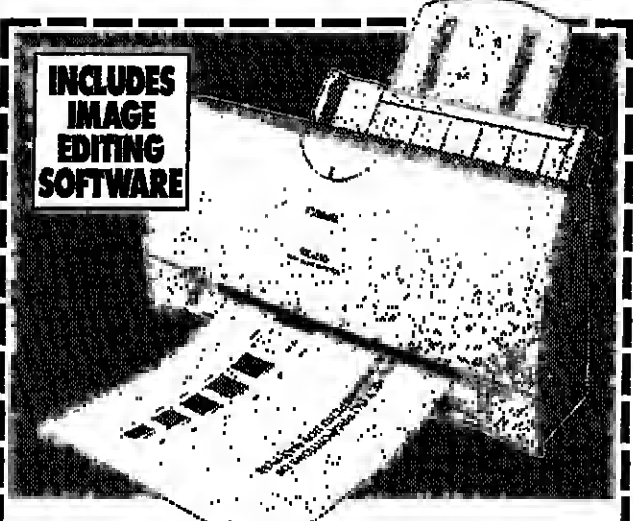
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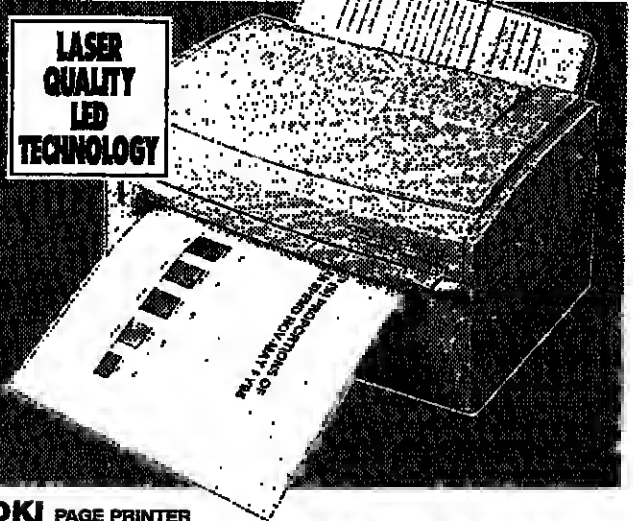
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# I would never let fans down - Grobbelaar

Michael Streeter

The former Liverpool goalkeeper Bruce Grobbelaar told the match-fixing trial yesterday that he had never tried to throw a football game in his career. Mr Grobbelaar, 39, told Winchester Crown Court that football was now a business and no one went out on the field looking to chuck a match. "There is no way I would throw a game," he told Rodney Klam, QC, for the defence.

The goalkeeper, now with Plymouth Argyle, said the allegations of match rigging had been "hanging over" him for three years. He denied receiving any money to fix matches from a fellow defendant Heng Sun Lin - known as Richard - to throw a match, though he had received sums for forecasting results.

Asked about a Liverpool-Manchester United game which was a 3-3 draw, the footballer

said it had been "one of my best performances". He added: "I do not think any goalkeeper could have saved any of the six goals scored."

Mr Grobbelaar, Mr Lin and the former Wimbledon striker John Fashanu deny receiving or giving money in a conspiracy to influence the outcome of football matches. Mr Lin, Mr Fashanu and the former Wimbledon goalkeeper Hans Segers, deny a similar charge. Mr Grobbelaar denies a separate charge of accepting £2,000 from his former business partner, Christopher Vincent, to influence a game.

Mr Grobbelaar said that by the 1993-94 season he realised he was near the end of his career but denied being unhappy at his salary from Liverpool. He denied receiving £40,000 for fixing a Liverpool-Newcastle match in a meeting with John Fashanu at the latter's house. Liverpool lost the match 3-0.

Mr Grobbelaar said that he received no money and said Mr Vincent was not telling the truth about this meeting which had occurred to discuss a match for the benefit of the victims of an air crash in Zambia involving that country's football team. The footballer said he had paid £20,000 to Mr Vincent but this had come from his "sock drawer" and was the proceeds of public speaking engagements and payments in cash from friends from Africa whose bills he had earlier settled.

Mr Grobbelaar told the court he had met Mr Vincent in Chester in 1992 and was asked to invest in a safari tourist business which he thought was a "good idea", and the following day paid more than £5,000 as an initial investment. He agreed the two later became close friends. However, over the next two years, Mr Grobbelaar had become concerned about where the money he was investing was going, and after a meeting in July 1994 the business deal had ended with Mr Grobbelaar having lost an estimated £60,000.

Mr Grobbelaar said he would receive around £250 for forecasting matches for Mr Lin and agreed that Mr Lin had paid him £1,500 for this forecasting help at the Hilton Hotel in London the night before a Liverpool-Norwich game.

Earlier, the court had heard how Mr Grobbelaar had played football in Durban, South Africa, before moving to Crewe in England and then Liverpool - the club he had always wanted to play for.

Mr Klam asked him about his presence at the Heysel stadium disaster in 1985 and at the Hillsborough disaster four years later. Mr Grobbelaar said that after the Heysel match he had considered giving up the game. At Hillsborough he had seen the agony on the faces of fans. He agreed that he would never want to let his fans down because he said he knew they would never forget that and would always ask him why he had done it. The case continues.

# Church seeks future in glorious past



Holy Island: Lindisfarne is the venue for one of 117 special events to mark 1,400 years of British Christianity

Photograph: North News

Stephen Goodwin  
Heritage Correspondent

Celebrations planned to mark the 1400th anniversary of St Augustine's mission to convert the Anglo-Saxons to Christianity should not be seen as an "exercise in ecclesiastical nostalgia", according to the Church of England.

In 597, St Augustine landed

in Kent on a papal mission to convert England to Christianity. After the end of Roman rule, British Christianity was confined to remote Celtic churches. Now, church and state are combining for a year of conservation and celebration.

In a potentially controversial move, fragments of bone and brain tissue believed to be of St Thomas à Becket will go on

display in an exhibition devoted to the Canterbury martyr. The relics were tested five years ago and dated as 12th century. Pilgrimages to and from Rome and linking early Christian sites in Britain are also planned.

The state's role, through English Heritage, is comparatively straightforward. Its chairman, Sir Jocelyn Stevens,

yesterday announced a £10,000 project to clean and protect the medieval tiles of the floor of the Chapter House at Westminster Abbey. Some 117 special events are planned at English Heritage's ecclesiastical properties ranging from the ruins of Lindisfarne, Priory off the Northumbrian coast to Old Sarum, the Iron Age hill fort near Salisbury, Wiltshire.

The Dean of Norwich, the Very Rev Stephen Platten, rejected suggestions that the church was burying its present woes in past glories. "It is the very reverse," he said. "The church challenges the present with a message which remains as radical now as it was in the 14th century."

For a free map of England's Christian Heritage, call 0171 973 3434.

## DAILY POEM

### Office Friendships

By Gavin Ewart

Eve is madly in love with Hugh  
And Hugh is keen on Jim.  
Charles is in love with very few  
And few are in love with him.

Myra sits typing notes of love  
With romantic pianist's fingers.  
Dick turns his eyes to the heavens above  
Where Furi's divine perfume lingers.

Nicky is rolling eyes and tits  
And flaunting her wiggly walk.  
Everybody is thrilled to bits  
By Clive's suggestive talk.

Sex suppressed will go berserk.  
But it keeps us all alive.  
It's a wonderful change from wives and work  
And it ends at half past five.

"Office Friendships" appears in *Making Love to Marilyn*, an anthology of love poems "from the seduction to the end of the affair", ranging from Sappho and Ovid to Carol Ann Duffy and Hugo Williams. It's edited by Susan Roberts and published by Viking (£9.99).

# Twenty infected by new E.coli outbreak

Liz Hunt  
Health Editor

At least 20 people have now been infected and two have died in the *E.coli* food poisoning outbreak in Arbroath it was confirmed yesterday, as new scientific evidence suggested that some yoghurts could protect against the bacterium.

Staff at the Thyside town's Cairnie Lodge Home have confirmed 11 further cases of exposure to the *E.coli* O157 bug.

Local MPs yesterday demanded a statement from the Secretary of State for Scotland, Michael Forsyth, as fears grew that more lives could be at risk among the elderly residents who are most vulnerable to the bacterium.

Two women have died and another 83-year-old is giving "cause for concern" in the Infectious Diseases Unit at King's Cross Hospital in Dundee. An 84-year-old man also being treated at the hospital is described as "comfortable".

Thyside Health Board said that the 11 new cases did not mean the outbreak was growing, and that all the cases were

symptomless so far, and being closely monitored.

Meanwhile scientists at the Institute of Food Research in Reading said that micro-organisms called bifidobacteria, found in some commercially available yoghurts, "fought off" *E.coli* in laboratory experiments. According to a report in *New Scientist* magazine, bifidobacterium occur naturally in

the human intestine, but levels fall rapidly as people get older.

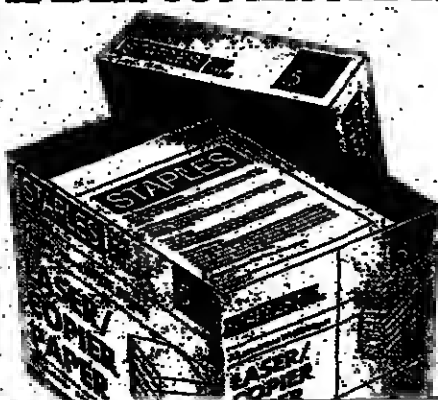
Glen Gibson, a scientist at the Institute said: "As bifidobacteria populations decline, those of potentially harmful bacteria, such as *E.coli* and *Streptococcus* surge." However, he warned that eating live yoghurt may not solve the problem. "It's asking a lot for them to get right through the gut to the large intestine."

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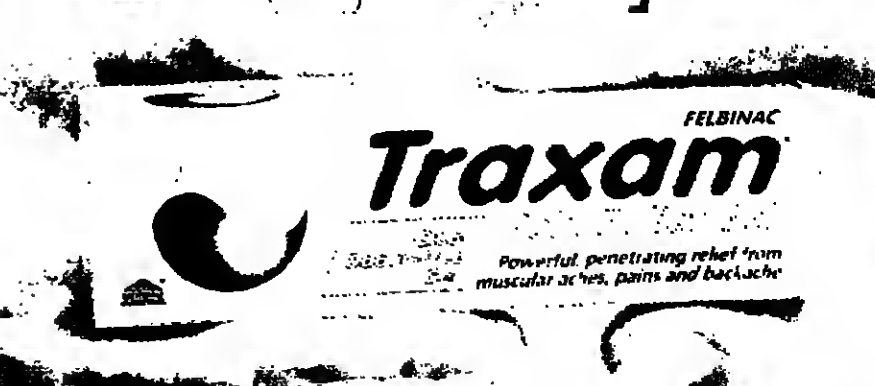
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## Women seek ways to bridge power gap

Jojo Moyes

Napoleon III's view that "it is the absence of women that enables men to tackle important daily questions", is shared by the world's parliaments, according to a new survey. It shows that women make up fewer than 12 per cent of MPs – 2 per cent less than there were 100 years ago.

Members of Parliament from 77 countries will meet in New Delhi today to discuss ways to bridge the gender gap in a follow-up to the 1995 United Nations Conference on Women in Peking, of which the survey forms a key part.

"The percentage of women involved in politics is far below parity," Pierre Cornillon, secretary-general of the Geneva-based Inter-Parliamentary Union. Its study of 179 parliaments released yesterday in Geneva, Washington and New Delhi, showed that only 11.7 per cent of the MPs world-wide are women, down from a high of 14.6 per cent in 1896, despite women comprising half of the world's population.

The IPU, which surveyed 1,000 political parties, also said that only one out of every 10 party leaders was a woman despite a large number of

female activists, and the gap between the sexes in political power was wider now than in 1985.

Countries with a high proportion of women MPs, such as Sweden, which came out best with more than 40 per cent or Norway, with 39 per cent, tend to use a different electoral system. Women make up 9 per cent of the MPs in Britain – where Nancy Astor was one of the first female MPs – and 6 per cent of those in France.

Some countries did not even have enough women legislators to meet a request that their small delegations to New Delhi be half female. They were told to make up the numbers with men. "The IPU will be advocating a new social contract for democracy based on parity between men and women in politics," Mr Cornillon said in a statement.

But he added that the IPU had given up its aim to achieve gender parity in parliaments by 2000 in favour of a more pragmatic approach.

Organisers said the conference would debate key issues to help boost women in parliaments such as financing women's electoral campaigns, quotas for women in parliaments and the image of women politicians in the media.



Pioneer: Nancy Astor, who was elected in 1919 Photograph: Hulton Getty

## Labour schools plan under fire

Judith Judd  
Education Editor

Labour's policy of reducing infant class sizes would restrict parental choice at popular primary schools, a new study said yesterday.

The party has promised to cut class sizes for five to seven-year-olds to a maximum of 30 using money from the Assisted Places Scheme which subsidises bright pupils at private schools. But a study from the Institute of Public Finance suggests the cost would rise dramatically unless more children were refused places at popular schools and directed to those with spare places.

Labour last night denied the report's suggestion that legislation would be necessary to restrict primary class sizes but accepted that appeals panels deciding admissions to popular schools would have to take class size into account.

At present, many oversized

classes are the result of successful appeals by parents refused places by schools which say they are full.

In some cases, the report says, education authorities could reduce class sizes simply by redistributing pupils, though this might prove unpopular with parents. In more remote areas, new teachers and new classrooms would be needed.

The report calculates that, over the seven years in which the assisted places scheme is phased out, the money saved would be at least £250m short of that required. Reducing infant class sizes would cost about £65m a year plus around £100m in capital costs, it says. Savings from assisted places would build up to about £40m a year after seven years and the accumulated deficit would then be £250m. The cost of educating the 34,000 pupils now on the scheme in state schools would still have to be met

by the taxpayer, the report says.

Peter Kilfoyle, shadow schools minister, said: "An additional 318,000 pupils have been accommodated in state schools over the last three years with no extra grant from the Exchequer. It is ridiculous to suggest that the cost of providing for 6,000 pupils a year who might otherwise have gone on assisted places is an addition."

A spokesman added: "There would be a partnership between schools and local authorities to ensure that parental demands were met."

David Woodhead, director of the Independent Schools Information Service which commissioned the report, said: "This analysis shows that Labour would issue a double blow to parental choice. Not only would poor families lose the opportunity of an independent school education but many more parents will find the doors of popular primary schools shut."

## Ryder threatens writ over report

Christian Wolmar  
Westminster Correspondent

The former Conservative Chief Whip, Richard Ryder, yesterday threatened to take legal action against the BBC and *The Guardian* following claims that he would be criticised by the Standards and Privileges Committee report which was published yesterday.

The report did not in fact mention Mr Ryder. It also exaggerated David Mitchell, the former Conservative whip under investigation, from using his position to dissuade the now-defunct Members' Interests Committee from investigating allegations two years ago that Neil Hamilton MP had accepted cash for questions in Parliament.

The report criticised Mr Mitchell's appointment to a quasi-judicial committee as "a mistake" because he was a whip at the time.

Last night, Mr Ryder threatened to issue libel writs, saying he had instructed his solicitors to "threaten, and if necessary institute legal proceedings" against the BBC and *The Guardian* over the earlier reports unless they apologised and paid damages.

In a letter to the chairman of the Standards and Privileges Committee, the Leader of the Commons Tony Newton, Mr Ryder also warned that he reserved the right to start legal proceedings against the Privileges Committee member "suspected of being the source of the

malicious briefing". He called on Mr Newton to carry out "an immediate and full investigation into this shambles", with witnesses interviewed in public on oath.

While the Standards and Privileges Committee report recommends that no appointments of whips to quasi-judicial committees should be made in future, it accepts Mr Mitchell's version that he was an unwitting party to events and had not realised that his appointment to the Members' Interests Committee would cause a row.

However, some Labour MPs are critical of the fact that the Privileges Committee did not summon any witnesses, other than Mr Mitchell.

One Labour source said: "This is another nail in the coffin for self-regulation." Yesterday's report contrasts sharply with an earlier report containing damning criticism of Tory minister David Willetts, accusing him of "dissembling". This report, published in December, led to his resignation.

The Standards and Privileges Committee will now consider the main complaint about Neil Hamilton accepting cash for questions, but it looks increasingly that it will fail to produce its report before the general election.

[Committee on Standards and Privileges, Complaints of alleged improper pressure brought to bear on the select committee on members', interest in 1994 (further report), Stationery Office, £8 80

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## windfall tax

Shadow chancellor pledges to plough £3bn revenue into programme to help unemployed

# Labour plans to impose levy in first Budget

Anthony Bevins  
Political editor

Labour's new windfall tax, which is expected "comfortably" to raise at least £3bn, will form part of Gordon Brown's first Budget, to be delivered within six weeks of his move into the Treasury.

But as Mr Brown showed in an interview on BBC Radio 4's *Today* programme yesterday, Labour is reluctant to go into any great detail before it discusses the practicalities - in government - with the Inland Revenue and privatised industry regulators.

Conservative demands for information on the amounts of tax to be raised from individual companies are regarded as a potential trap for the unwary, creating hostages to fortune.

While Labour's legal advice is that the windfall tax would withstand legal challenge in British or European courts, that does not mean that Labour leaders can abandon all care.

Injudicious statements could yet open the tax to legal action, as could any inequality of application of the tax. All utilities would have to be put on the same footing; if one was unjustifiably exempted, others could then open legal proceedings.

However, Mr Brown told *Today*: "I think what the utilities will now want to do, instead of defending a privileged position, is to work with us so that we can implement this in a sensible way."

He said that every privatised utility would be considered as a candidate for the tax, to be judged on the basis of "the extent of their monopoly position, the weakness, or not, of the regulatory regime, and the value of the assets on the point of sale."

But Mr Brown said last night there was no question, whatever the utilities themselves

threatened, "of any regulator allowing any rise in prices because of the windfall levy."

"And any attempt to lower investment levels below those which are promised would, of course, be in breach of undertakings made."

The main purpose of the tax is to finance Labour's pledge to get 250,000 young unemployed off benefit and into work.

Explaining how the one-off £3bn levy would be spent over a period of years, Mr Brown said in an Anthony Crosland

Memorial Lecture last night: "A tax rebate of £50 a week will be offered to a private company to take young people on."

"They will be offered the option of employment through a community and voluntary organisation programme, or through our new Environmental Taskforce as part of our Citizen's Service."

"And each of these three options for work involves day-release education or training leading to a qualification."

"And to create a fourth option, full-time further education and training, we will cut the perversion of unemployed young

men and women, without basic qualifications, being banned from benefit if they study for more than 16 hours."

Mr Brown repeated that "there will be no fifth option of remaining permanently on full benefit," he warned.

As for the older long-term unemployed, Mr Brown said that employers who took on people who had been unemployed for two years or more would be offered a £75 a week tax rebate.

The basic Labour employment programme is expected to cost £900m in the first year for the under-25s, and £100m for the long-term unemployed, with another £2bn spread over the remaining four years of a five-year Parliament.

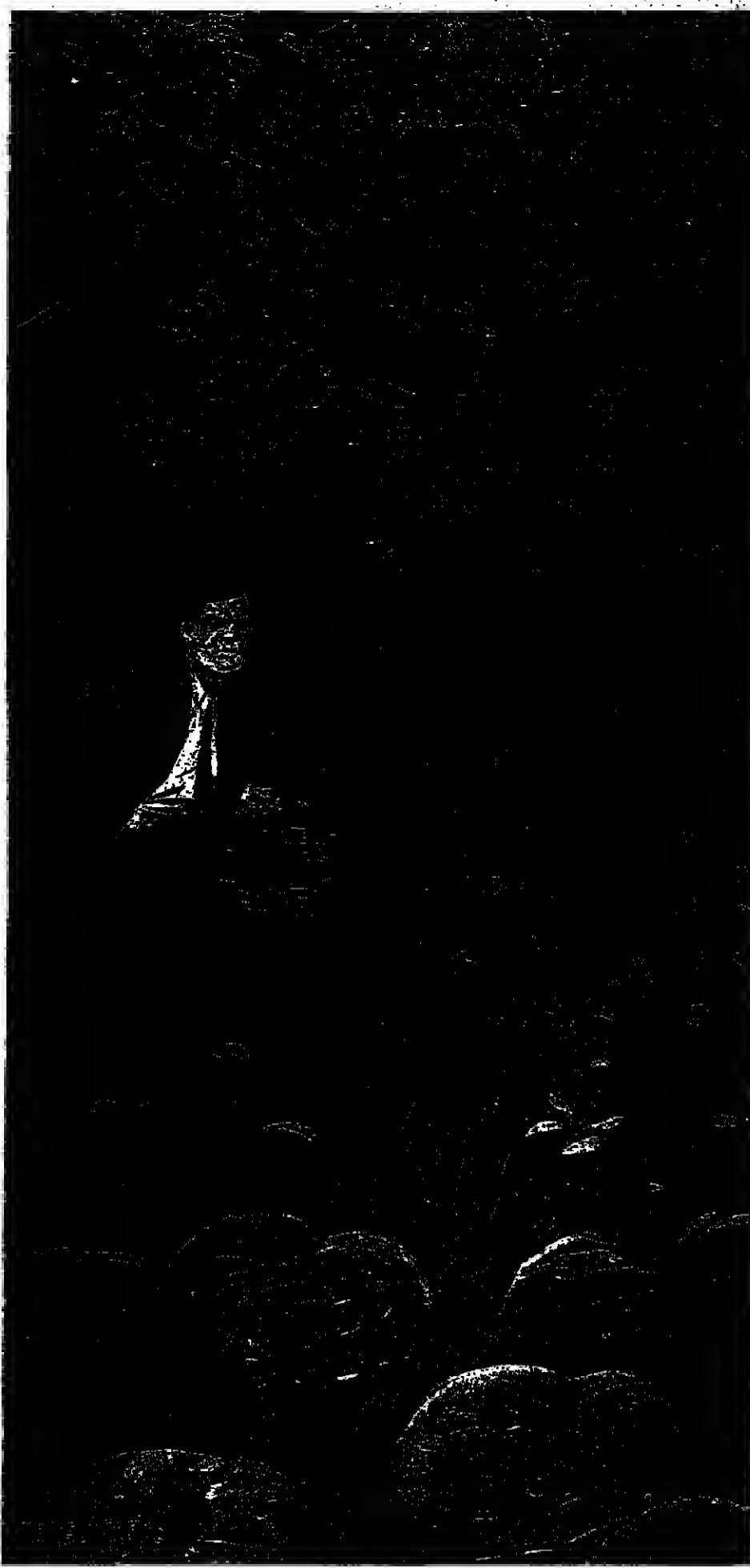
If the windfall levy raised more than £3bn, that would be ploughed into the programme to help the unemployed - "part of an abandoned and forgotten generation."

Putting the tax into its political context, Mr Brown said last night: "There have been left-of-centre politicians who have espoused socialism, but failed to meet the test of credibility," he said. "There have been those who have presented themselves as credible by abandoning socialism."

"The real challenge of left-of-centre politics is to be socialist and at the same time credible." That was a challenge, he said, that Labour fully understood - "and fully intend to meet."

Mr Brown also said the "second building block" of his modernisation programme would bring a lower starting rate of income tax - 10p in the pound - and an adjustment of benefit clawback, "to make work pay".

It was said last night that he would like to introduce the 10p rate in his first year of office - but there is no question of windfall tax revenue being diverted to finance that proposal.



## Utility chiefs resigned to paying levy

Chris Godsmark  
Business Correspondent

The privatised utilities may kick and scream over the Shadow Chancellor Gordon Brown's proposed windfall tax, but in reality most are privately resigned to paying it.

The bulk of the huge profits earned by the electricity and water companies will continue to be based on monopolies over pipelines and wires for the foreseeable future.

Labour has given up listening to directors of these businesses who naively believe they can avoid the tax altogether. Most have stopped lobbying shadow ministers in favour of examining the legality of the tax.

Already several utilities have pledged to test the legislation in the European Court in the interests of their shareholders. So even they are not afraid to court controversy, the City of London arm of the National Westminster Bank, concluded that "logic" suggested Labour would raise £5bn.

An analyst with another leading City bank, who did not want to be named, said: "The utilities all have strong balance sheets with relatively small amounts of debt. Provided the tax is not levied at draconian rates they'll write a cheque out to pay it. They may not do that happily, but it won't hurt them."

The real haggling will be over those companies which have changed so much since the initial burst into the private sector that they no longer consider themselves to be utilities at all. British Telecom is the most obvious example. "We would argue we are not a monopoly utility," a spokesman said yesterday.

In BT's defence it does face stiff competition in the business and international phone call markets. The company's £12bn merger with the aggressive American long-distance operator, MCI Communications, also lessens BT's dependence on the UK market.

Yet BT still controls more than 90 per cent of residential phone lines and domestic cus-

tomers will see their bills inflated by a tough price until 2001.

The row goes a step further with BAA, the former British Airports Authority. Though it has a hugely dominant position in the South-east of England as the owner of Heathrow, Gatwick and Stansted airports, it has been hard at work lobbying Labour to try to show its competitive credentials.

It also insists that it has not made excess earnings and paid £103m in tax last year. How Mr Brown's parliamentary Bill will combat these claims is still unclear.

Yet perhaps the biggest burden Mr Brown faces may not be from the companies themselves, but from the industry regulators, who he has pledged to consult.

Yesterday Clare Spottiswoode, the gas regulator and one who is never afraid to court controversy, said that she would tell Mr Brown that the tax would be "hard to justify".

She claimed her recent savage price formula for British Gas's pipeline business was designed to compensate for past efficiency gains. She went on: "If I was going to do my job properly there won't be any excess profits."

Ms Spottiswoode also argued that current shareholders of British Gas, who have had a torrid time in recent months because of her own price proposals, would be the ones clobbered rather than those who made the true windfall gains in the glory days of the late 1980s after privatisation.

Labour will also have to prevent the tax being passed on to consumers in higher bills.

Professor Stephen Littlechild, the electricity regulator, has said that he would be obliged to look at the case put to him by the companies. Equally, party sources said they would override such a move using existing legislation.

Few of those affected genuinely believe Mr Brown will fail to push through his cherished windfall levy. But this does not mean they will stop trying every method possible to persuade him to abandon it.

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## Turks Islami

Christopher de Bellaigue

There is a new movement in Turkey. It is called the 'Islamic movement' and it is the most significant development in the country since the 1980s.

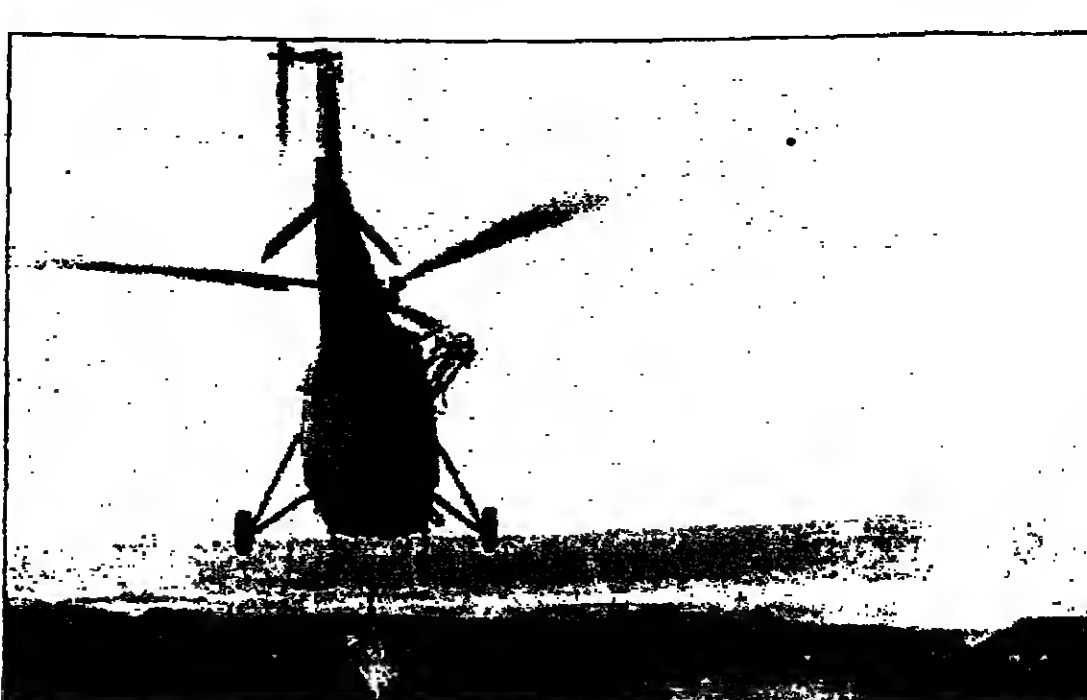
The movement is led by a group of young men who are dedicated to the principles of Islam. They are known as the 'Islamic movement' and they are the most significant development in the country since the 1980s.

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## The pictures that prove the guilt of Moshe Dayan — hero and thief

Patrick Cockburn  
Jerusalem

For three decades General Moshe Dayan, the most revered Israeli military leader, looted archaeological sites in Israel and in territories conquered by the Israeli army. He robbed antiquities wherever he could reach, says Uri Avnery, a former magazine editor and radical member of the Knesset, who for years campaigned against Gen Dayan's activities.

By the time he died, his reputation tarnished by setbacks in the 1973 war with Egypt and Syria, the archaeological depredations of Israel's most famous general were notorious. He frequently dispatched military units to locate and retrieve objects for his collection. On his death in 1981, the Israel Museum in Jerusalem paid \$1m (£620,000) for a thousand objects owned by Gen Dayan, though critics argued that most were illegally acquired.

"It wasn't easy for archaeologists to stand up to him," says Uri Avnery, an archaeologist who knew Gen Dayan, says he had great intuition about where to dig, but also an all-consuming "lust for finding antiquities". Uri Avnery says Gen Dayan grew up poor and was always eager for money. "He would go to an Arab dealer in Bethlehem, but the man would not dare to turn him down or charge him the real price for an object. It was close to expropriation."

Talbot Aron, curator of the Dayan collection at the Israel Museum, says pieces of ancient jewellery, Gen Dayan is known to have once owned were not among the objects the museum bought. "What we got was mostly pots and jars."

The reason Gen Dayan was able to get away with this for so long was that after Israel's victories in 1956 and 1967 he was a national hero.

Mr Avnery says that not only did archaeologists not support him against Gen Dayan, but "I have never known such hatred towards me because of my cam-

paign, not just in the Knesset but from people in the streets."

An Israeli journalist, Shosh Mula, working for the Jerusalem weekly *Kol Ha'ir* has now discovered photographs taken by an Israeli military helicopter pilot, which for the first time show one incident of archaeological theft actually taking place just after the Israeli army, whose chief of staff was Gen Dayan, captured Sinai in 1956.

Uri Yaron, the pilot, has vivid memories of what happened, because he believes his life was put in danger by the venture, which had no military justification.



Close-up of carving of the Goddess Hathor on the stela

No sooner had the fighting finished during the Suez war of 1956 than Gen Dayan took his family to southern Sinai to visit Sarabit al-Khadim, a mountain-top which is the site of an ancient Egyptian sanctuary of the XII Dynasty, dedicated to the Goddess Hathor, often represented as a cow-headed woman. Beside her temple are stelae, or stone pillars, covered with hieroglyphs and carvings. On 27 November, only three weeks after the Israelis captured southern Sinai, Uri Yaron was sent to bring three of the stelae to Israel, where they ended up in the courtyard of Gen Dayan's house.

"We were told the mission was of national importance," Mr Yaron told Shosh Mula. From the beginning they faced difficulties. Thick mist over Sinai

made it difficult for them to reach Abu Rudeis, the airbase nearest to Sarabit al-Khadim. "We flew over the ground, seeing nothing but clouds," Mr Yaron said. "The maps we had in our hands were of no value."

At Abu Rudeis they found somebody had stolen the extra supplies of gasoline on which they were counting. As they waited there was a sandstorm and Mr Yaron was frightened that sand would get into the helicopter's engine. He tried to protect it with canvas cut from old beach umbrellas.

The next day the helicopter found Sarabit al-Khadim after two failed attempts. The photographs show Mr Yaron standing with three other soldiers in front of a 10ft-high stela with others in the background.

Another photograph shows the AS-55 helicopter in the air with the stela hanging beneath it. It weighed half a tonne. "It was lack of responsibility not to tell us the weight," says Mr Yaron. Back in Tel Aviv a driver loading one of three stones onto a truck for carriage to Gen Dayan's house was surprised by its weight and dropped it, cracking the 3,500-year-old carving.

The travels of the carvings from the temple of Hathor were not over. In 1979 Gen Dayan joined the right-wing government of Menachem Begin as Foreign Minister. His reputation had never quite recovered from the initial success of the surprise attack made by Egypt and Syria in 1973.

At Camp David Israel agreed openly to return Sinai to Egypt and, less publicly, to return the carvings from Sinai which had been sitting in the courtyard of Gen Dayan's house. "The main difficulty was to persuade Dayan to give them back," said one of those involved.

Two years later Gen Dayan died. His health had been damaged by falling into an archaeological excavation. There was criticism of the purchase of his collection by the Israel Museum for such a large sum since under Israeli law the objects should have automatically be-



How it was done: The pilot Uri Yaron, in dark glasses, with the helicopter crew by the stela at Sarabit al-Khadim (above) before flying off with the stela hanging beneath it (top), en route for the house of Gen Dayan (top left)

longed to the state. Certain items were missing.

Talbot Aron, curator of the Dayan collection, says the museum has 35 unique pottery coffins from 1,400 BC found in the Gaza strip acquired by Gen Dayan, but there is "no sign of the jewellery found in some of them."

By contrast the loot taken from Sarabit al-Khadim is back where it came from, none the worse for its sojourn in Israel, except that a large crack now runs down the face of a stela portraying the Goddess Hathor.

## Still not French after 74 years in France

John Lichfield  
Paris

Anyone who has applied for any form of official document in France will sympathise with the sad, but ultimately happy, story of Angeline Le Layour.

A great-grandmother, aged 83, she has lived for 74 years in Morlaix, a small town in Brittany, believing herself to be French. One day last March she applied for a new identity card and was told she was not French, or at least could not prove she was French.

Mrs Le Layour had become French (or so she thought) when she married 66 years ago. She had voted in every French election over several decades, had French children, French grandchildren and French great-grandchildren. She had owned a succession of French identity cards and passports.

When her identity card expired last year, she applied for a new, computerised one. She was asked to produce a Certificate of French Nationality, which had never been required before and which, as far as she knew, she had never possessed. (The rules for automatic renewal of French identity cards have been changed as part of the switch to computerised cards. But many suspect identity and immigration procedures are being tightened in response to criticisms from Jean-Marie Le Pen's far-right Front National).

In any event, Mrs Le Layour was refused a new card. She appealed to the local courts and was again refused. The court said she must "justify her possession of French citizenship". For the last 11 months she has been technically stateless.

This week her lawyer, Gilles Caroff, appealed to the government, to publicise her case nationally. Yesterday, the Interior Minister, Jean-Louis Debré sent her a personal letter promising he would waive the rules. By early afternoon, Mrs Le Layour was French again and had the card to prove it. Mr Caroff said yesterday it was a case of "bureaucratic lunacy". He had brought a string of witnesses to attest to Mrs Le Layour's Frenchness but it was not judged sufficient. "At least it has ended happily," he said.

The story coincides with a row over immigration rules. A law proposed by Mr Debré to "streamline" the procedures was stiffened by the National Assembly and then softened by the Senate last week. The suspicion is that the government wishes to play both sides of the fence, to deflect attacks from Mr Le Pen's Front National.

## Turks take dim view of Islamists' rising profile

Christopher de Bellaigue  
Ankara

"Parasites," is how Necmettin Erbakan, Turkey's Islamic-inclined prime minister, described several million of his compatriots on Monday. Mr Erbakan and his Welfare Party do not approve of a growing number of Turks who have taken to extinguishing their lights for a minute at 9pm each night.

The protest, which began modestly, but is now spreading fast, was originally intended to express liberal Turks' disquiet at corruption within the state. However, government sensitivity — curious, since Mr Erbakan's Welfare Party remains largely unimplicated in allegations of skulduggery — has made it a symbol of an acrimonious debate between secularists and Islamists.

Tactless comments by Mr Erbakan's justice minister, Seyket Kazan, have propelled Turkey's Alevis (Alevites), a religious minority numbering around 15 million, to prominence within this debate. Mr Kazan's mistake was to de-

scribe the nine o'clock protesters as players in "a game of candle-snuffing". Turks recognise this as an allusion to Alevi religious ceremonies, which in times of oppression took place in darkness. These involve both male and female family members. Mischievous Sunnis — who pray in seclusion from women — joke that the Alevis take advantage of the darkness to indulge in incest. But unlike Mr Kazan, few say so in public.

Mr Kazan's stock with Turkey's Alevis, who ally syncretist Islam with liberal politics, is already low enough. A lawyer by profession, Mr Kazan once defended religious zealots when they were accused of burning to death 37 Alevis and Alevi sympathisers in the central Anatolian town of Sivas.

Alevi groups say they hope the justice minister will appear in court on charges of "fomenting division", a serious accusation in strongly unitary Turkey. His indiscretion has already cost him friends in Welfare's coalition partner, the True Path Party.

Besides enraging Turkish

Alevis, Mr Kazan's comments have once again focused attention on tensions between Islamists and their more secular-minded countrymen.

Earlier this month, these tensions boiled over in Sincan, a small town 25 miles from Ankara. The town's Welfare Party mayor had endorsed a call by Iran's ambassador to Ankara for the imposition of the Sharia, Islamic law, in Turkey. Two days later, again in Sincan, a female television journalist was assaulted by a municipal employee. Then, on 4 February, Sincan's dawn calm was disturbed by the rumble of 30 tanks and armoured cars through the main street. "A routine manoeuvre," winked the top brass, who cite a constitutional obligation to protect the republic's secular status.

Sophistry, reply Turks, who were reminded of coups which took place in 1960 and 1980. They were not alone; on Wednesday, Madeleine Albright, the US Secretary of State, said that she too hoped Turkey would remain secular. The Americans have been worried by Mr Erbakan's over-

tures to Iran, whom they are trying to isolate internationally.

However, despite Welfare's best efforts to plant the pious inside the civil service, the bulk of Turkey's state apparatus — led by the military — appears to have resisted the lure of Islamic revivalism. Only this month, pressure from the military and some True Path ministers persuaded Mr Erbakan to abandon a series of innocuous-sounding measures designed to make Turkey a more Islamic place. These included proposals to build a large mosque in Istanbul's Taksim Square, a historic symbol of Turkey's links with the West, and to allow female civil servants to wear Islamic-style headscarves at work.

Islamists meanwhile become increasingly frustrated and there are claims that Sunni fundamentalist groups are using a rapid increase in gun ownership to prepare for violent conflict. However, the army remains grimly determined that Turkey will not become like Iran, and dimmed dining rooms at nine o'clock indicate that many more Turks agree.

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## international

## Britons to lose special HK status

Stephen Vines  
Hong Kong

Hong Kong's government has outlined plans to curb the visiting and residency rights of British people who have hitherto enjoyed a privileged status in the colony.

If legislation is passed on schedule, Britons will lose all privileges from 1 April, meaning that they will require visas to work, study or do business in Hong Kong.

More surprisingly, long-standing residents who have lived in the colony for more than

seven years, will lose their "right to land" and will not enjoy the special deportation arrangements which prevail at present. It is highly unusual, under the system of common law, to make retrospective changes.

"I look at it as a matter of changing somebody's rights," said Margaret Ng, a legislator who believes the government is pushing the bill through with unseemly haste.

However, Hong Kong's government is under considerable pressure to remove any hint of a suggestion that Britons will enjoy any form of privilege once

the colony returns to Chinese sovereignty in July.

Chinese language newspapers yesterday published editorials welcoming the move and stating that it was in line with preparations for the end of British rule. However, some legislators believe that the measures do not go far enough.

Chan Yuen-ha, a pro-Peking legislator, is introducing a private members bill to remove an alleged loophole under which the director of immigration has discretion in granting work permits.

After April, Britons will be al-

lowed a six-month visa-free stay in Hong Kong, compared with the current 12 month period, and they will only be allowed to visit as tourists.

It is becoming increasingly difficult to get an accurate idea of how many British people remain in the colony. At the beginning of the month, the government published statistics which suggested that the number of British residents had been cut by a quarter to 25,500, in the ten months from February to December last year. However, anecdotal evidence and reports from employers of

manual labour suggest that Britons are still flooding in to take advantage of special rules which mean they do not need to obtain work permits. On the other hand, a lot of long-standing residents, particularly civil servants, are finding their jobs being subject to localisation, forcing them to move out.

There have been no protests from the British community about the changes to the law. Christopher Hammerbeck, the executive director of the British Chamber of Commerce, said he thought the proposals were "broadly fair". He stated that

the aim was "to get British citizens on the same basis as other foreign nationals".

China has promised that it will not make special arrangements for its citizens to live in Hong Kong. Indeed, fears of an influx from the mainland have prompted the Chinese authorities to make it clear that although Hong Kong is returning to the motherland, its citizens will not be free to travel to the former British colony. Instead of getting entry permits from Hong Kong, they will need permission from the Chinese government.

## significant shorts

## Leaders of genocide to appear in court

Arusha, Tanzania — Four prominent Rwandans accused of genocide will appear in court in Tanzania for the first time on 19 and 20 February, the UN tribunal said yesterday.

Theoneste Bagosora, a former colonel in the Hutu Rwandan army, was widely regarded as the most wanted suspect until he was extradited from jail in Cameroon to Arusha on 23 January. A cabinet director in Rwanda's defence ministry at the time of the 1994 genocide, he is accused of directing events in the first days of the mass slaughter of some 800,000 people, mostly Tutsis. Anatole Nsengiyumva is a former lieutenant-colonel. Andre Ntagerura is a former minister of transport and Ferdinand Nahimana is former director of Radio Mille Collines, which fanned ethnic hatred.

Reuters

## Serbs protest return to Croatia

Vukovar — Thousands of Serb protesters, blowing whistles and horns like fellow Serbs demanding democracy in Serbia, marched in a separatist enclave in Croatia due to revert to government rule. The Eastern Slavonia enclave broke away from Croatia in 1991. It is now monitored by 5,000 UN peacekeeping troops headed by US general Jacques Klein. "Klein, God will punish you" "Give us our rights" and "We're also made of flesh and blood" were slogans shouted in the raucous but peaceful rally.

Reuters

## EMU rules should be changed

Paris — The former French president, Valéry Giscard d'Estaing, yesterday called for a change in the EMU rules to allow Spain and Italy to join the starting line-up of the European single currency.

Mr Giscard d'Estaing said the two southern countries, should be allowed to sign up for the single currency with other countries early next year even if their economies fail to meet the guidelines laid out in the Maastricht treaty. They would then be allowed to peg the lire and the peseta to the euro from the target date of January 1999 if their economies meet the entry conditions by that time.

In an interview with the *International Herald Tribune*, the former French President said it would be unhealthy for the EU if only northern European countries joined the Euro in the first wave.

John Lintfield

## OJ experts join murder inquiry

Los Angeles — Two leading figures in the OJ Simpson case have joined the task force investigating the murder of six-year-old beauty queen JonBenet Ramsey. Henry Lee, one of the world's foremost forensic scientists, and attorney and DNA expert Barry Scheck were instrumental in persuading a criminal jury in 1995 that blood evidence against Simpson was flawed. But they are now advising prosecutors in Boulder, Colorado. There are no named suspects and no arrests in the Ramsey case, seven weeks after her battered and strangled body was found in the basement of her family's home. Her wealthy parents, John and Patricia Ramsey, hired John Douglas, a former FBI agent, and model for an investigator in the film *Silence of the Lambs*.

Tim Cornwell

## Clinton farewell to Harriman

Washington — President Bill Clinton bade farewell to Pamela Harriman with the words of Winston Churchill, calling her an American who "felt to her bones" her adopted country's greatness. The funeral for the US ambassador to France, who died last week, was held at Washington's National Cathedral.

AP

## Solana winds up CIS trip

Moscow — Nato Secretary-General Javier Solana wound up a tour of four Russian allies, ending a trip that irked Russian leaders who oppose the alliance's plans to expand into Eastern Europe. Mr Solana visited the former Soviet republics of Moldova, Georgia, Armenia and Azerbaijan, all of them members of the Russian-led Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) as well as Nato's Partnership for Peace program. Presidential spokesman Sergei Yastrebensky accused Solana of having an "undeclared, undercover reason" for the trip.

AP

## Albright backs Netanyahu

Washington — Secretary of State Madeleine Albright assured Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu she will give her strong personal attention to peacemaking in the Middle East. Meeting at Blair House, they agreed that Arab-Israeli agreements should be based on reciprocity. Mr Netanyahu told Ms Albright that Israel has fulfilled the commitments it made to the Palestinians and the Arabs and that he expects the Palestinians to reciprocate.

AP

## Progress on landmine ban

Vienna — Momentum to ban land mines world-wide gathered as a top UN official said the issue will almost certainly be on the agenda of a UN Conference on Disarmament in Geneva within two months. "My expectation is that within a month or two we should find an agreement [to discuss landmines] on the agenda," UN Deputy Secretary-General Vladimir Petrovsky, who is also head of the Conference on Disarmament, said.

Reuters

## Mandela warns of Swazi chaos

Harare — South African President Nelson Mandela said the situation in Swaziland, where strikers are trying to bring down an absolute monarchy, was "explosive". A national strike began 10 days ago in the small southern African state, where trade unions have crippled the country's vital sugar and timber export industries.

Reuters

## 'Don't set me free' plea

Jerusalem — A Palestinian woman convicted of drug offences and due to be released from an Israeli prison has refused to leave jail. "She doesn't want to leave," an Israeli prison spokeswoman said of Zaynab Abu Sido, who was due to be freed along with 30 other Palestinian women prisoners earlier this week under an Israel-PLO peace deal. A prison source said she feared she would be ostracised if forced to return to Palestinian self-rule areas.

## A tale of two Koreas tests China's skills

Richard Lloyd Parry

China and South Korea will continue delicate negotiations today on the fate of a senior North Korean politician who dramatically defected in Peking two days ago.

The South Korean embassy in Peking was sealed off by dozens of police yesterday, after the arrival there on Wednesday of Hwang Jang Yop, a senior adviser to the North Korean leader, Kim Jong Il. Reports from Peking said that North Korean diplomats had attempted to enter the compound overnight, and remained lurking outside in parked cars during the day.

South Korea dispatched senior officials to Peking to negotiate ways of bringing Mr Hwang to Seoul, and the Chinese and South Korean foreign ministers will discuss the affair this weekend at an international governmental meeting in Singapore. The Foreign Ministry denied claims from Pyongyang that Mr Hwang had been kidnapped by South Korean agents on his way back home from an international conference in Tokyo, but official utterances in Seoul were lacking in the hysteria which often characterises relations with the North.

Diplomats on all sides seem to realise that this is serious: quite apart from the humiliation to the unpredictable North Korean government, the defection creates a diplomatic dilemma for China which cannot but cause offence to one of its two quarrelsome neighbours.

Since initiating its market reforms, China has been more successful than any other country in balancing relations with Seoul and Pyongyang. With the North, it enjoys close relations



No-win situation: Chinese police discussing tactics outside the South Korean embassy yesterday. Photograph: Reuters

as the country which intervened in the Korean War, and indirectly brought about the 45-year-old division of the peninsula. With the South, it also has full diplomatic relations and flourishing two-way trade.

It is almost inconceivable that China will jeopardise these and outrage international opinion by sending Mr Hwang back to Pyongyang. But if he is allowed to go to Seoul, it could seriously harm the only significant friendship which North Korea has left in the world.

The precise motives and exact circumstances behind the defection of 72-year old Mr

Hwang, along with a North Korean businessman, are still murky, and were made no clearer by the publication yesterday of two documents bearing his name.

The first, a rambling and emotional letter said to have been written a month ago, and passed on via an unnamed South Korean businessman in Peking, appeared on the front page of the *Chosun Ilbo*, a leading Seoul newspaper. Opposition parties pointed out that it contains several striking echoes of South Korean government policy, and were prompt to suggest that it was

faked. It urges the South to strengthen its military and internal security forces, and abandon any hope of negotiation with Pyongyang. "North Korea is waiting for the moment to turn the South into a sea of fire and tries to dissolve the South from within," it said.

But it also contained bitter criticism of Kim Jong Il, the son of North Korea's president, over three years of floods, food shortages and economic failure. "The 'ever-so-great general' has come to believe that he is really a genius after all the idolatry showered on him praising him as a great genius. How can a society where people, workers, farmers, and intellectuals starve to death be a socialist society?"

The second document was a note said to have been written by Mr Hwang since his defection. "After a long period of agonising deliberation, I have decided to leave the North and have a broader discussion with South Korean authorities about how to save our nation from misery," it reads. "Beginning with my family, people will decide that I'm mad. But the question is: Am I the only mad person?"

## EU fails to block Burma's entry to Asean

Richard Lloyd Parry  
Singapore

The year-long diplomatic struggle between the European Union and the Association of South East Asian Nations (Asean) over Burma is over, with EU governments accepting that there is nothing they can do to stop the Rangoon junta joining Asean.

The EU and Asean spent two hours on the subject in Singapore yesterday, in what the Foreign Secretary, Malcolm Rifkind, called "a very good exchange of views on the worrying and disturbing situation in that country and the need to see the progress towards democratic institutions and a return to civilian government in Burma". But, despite the increasing repression of the country's State Law and Order Restoration Council (Slorc), the seven Asean countries, including Indonesia, Singapore and Malaysia, seem determined to admit Burma, probably this summer.

The dispute came to a head last June when Rangoon was admitted as an observer member, shortly before a meeting in Jakarta of the Asean Regional Forum, which includes the United States, Japan, and the European Commission. Ever since 1990, when the Slorc ignored the results of an election won by the democracy leader Aung San Suu Kyi, Burma has been regarded as a pariah state in many western capitals, and the presence of the Burmese foreign minister at the Jakarta conference caused outrage among European diplomats. "It's as if the EU took on Libya as a member," said one at the time.

At an Asean meeting in November the argument was won by Malaysia and Indonesia, who insist that only through "positive engagement" can Rangoon be integrated into the international community. Burma is expected to be formally admitted, along with Laos and Cambodia, in Kuala Lumpur, on the 30th anniversary of Asean's foundation in June.

## Lorry drivers paralyse northern Spain

Elizabeth Nash  
Madrid

The northern half of Spain was paralysed yesterday by a lorry-drivers' strike that unions said would spread throughout the country in coming days.

As the strike, in support of better working conditions, entered its second week, factories in the industrialised Basque country closed through lack of supplies and shops were stripped of foodstuffs as shop-

pers stocked up. The government appealed for the drivers to negotiate and indicated that they would increase the subsidy to govt, one of their key demands. But last night ministers sounded a pessimistic note.

Some 30 British lorrydrivers were stuck in Bilbao and 10 had to be escorted by police through picket lines. Representatives from the development, labour, economy and industry ministries met some transport associations yesterday, but the

leading union, Fedatrans, which called the strike, refused to join them.

In the most serious incident in the dispute so far a picket was run over near Burgos and killed yesterday morning when he ran into the road to stop a French trucker from passing.

In addition to reducing the retirement age to 60 years from 65, drivers are pushing for diesel subsidies, a revision of rates and recognition of occupational illnesses. The respon-

sible minister, Rafael Arias Salgado, said he might move on lower diesel prices but needed more time to consider the other issues. The Interior Ministry ordered security forces to guarantee essential supplies to towns.

Car manufacturers were worst hit by the strike. Renault's Spanish unit FASA-Renault stopped production at plants in Valladolid and Palencia. In the Basque region, Michelin said it would be paral-

ysed if the strike continued. Mercedes-Benz shut its plants in Barcelona and Vitoria, while production at General Motors unit Opel in Aragon, Citroen in Vigo and Nissan in Barcelona also stopped. Other companies including Firestone, Campofrio, and Asturias del Zinc said they had been disrupted by a lack of supplies.

One driver was slightly injured on Wednesday when he was hit on the head by a stone while trying to fill up his truck

at a petrol station in the Leon province. Pickets were also injured in clashes with police.

Fedatrans warned the chaos would worsen and said it had brought another leading union on board, Fenadisner, while others were mulling a call to workers to take action.

Taxi driver unions are also contemplating joining the strike from Monday. Fedatrans said the only solution would be for the government to agree swiftly to their demands.

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Short-term interest  
political stability  
has been put  
the longer-term  
problems, writes  
Andrew Gumbel



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## Legacy

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## obituaries / gazette

## Daniil Shafran

The great Russian cellist Daniil Shafran seldom appeared in Britain but when he did the hall would be packed with celebrities and fellow cellists and their response was overwhelming. Because of his highly individual style, Shafran aroused strong feelings. To his admirers, he was regarded with an almost religious reverence; to the unconvinced, he remained an enigma.

I heard him at the Wigmore Hall in June 1995 and I found his performance riveting, even if the risks did not always come off. His playing revealed a profound musicality and a subtle lyricism producing a tone that was rich and mellow. Perhaps the most extraordinary aspect was his ability to paint every possible tone colour at will.

Shafran was born in 1923, in Petrograd (which the following year became Leningrad), and was the son of the principal cellist of the Leningrad Symphony Orchestra. From early childhood he begged to have lessons on the cello but his father, who held strong views on teaching, resisted his request until he was eight years old. He told him that he could learn provided he was prepared to work hard and devote his life to becoming a professional musician. Otherwise he should forget it. The boy chose to accept his father's challenge and never complained about the long hours of practice which were exacted of him. A legacy from this time was that throughout his professional life he would always put on full evening dress for the final rehearsal of any performance; his father maintained that an artist could be compared with a soldier planning an operation and a dress rehearsal was *de rigueur*.

At the age of 10, Shafran was admitted to the Special Music School, part of the Leningrad Conservatory, as a pupil of Alexander Shtrimer, who was not only a first-class teacher but also knowledgeable in art and literature and all things cultural. Therefore, from an early age, Shafran's approach to music was multi-dimensional.

It was Shtrimer who was responsible for Shafran's tone colour. He maintained that a musician must be aware of everything going on around him, should know about the colours of the grass, the trees and the sky and be able to express the drama in everything. Shafran gave me an example – Debussy's *Claire de Lune*. His teacher once asked him: "Have you ever seen moonlight? You must see it before you can play it." At that moment I recalled Shafran's playing of that piece as an encore when he almost physically re-created the chill of the moonlight.

Shafran made his first solo appearance at the age of 12 when he played two virtuoso pieces by David Popper, *Spinning Song* and *Elfenland*. That same year he made his public solo debut playing the Tchaikovsky *Rococo Variations* with the Leningrad Philharmonic Orchestra directed by the British Albert Coates, for which he received rave reviews. He told me that Coates gave him an excellent piece of advice which he never forgot. "Never hurry on and off the platform but stroll as if you are taking a leisurely walk in Hyde Park."

Shafran made his first recording of the *Rococo Variations* in 1937 when he was only 14, and the same year entered the National Competition in Moscow. As he was under age the judges allowed him to play first, but he confounded them by taking first prize, thus defeating all the adult candidates. Part of the prize was the presentation of a beautiful Antonio Amati cello that he played always for the rest of his life, and loved as if it were his child.

In 1943, Shafran became a soloist with the Moscow Philharmonic Orchestra and toured internationally with them meeting success everywhere he went. He won the International Competition in Budapest in 1949 and the following year shared the first prize in the Prague International Competition with Rostropovich. He made his American debut in 1960 at Carnegie Hall, his British debut at the Wigmore Hall in 1964 followed by his orchestral debut playing Prokofiev's Symphony Concerto at the Royal Festival Hall.

In 1971 the Soviet government conferred upon Shafran the title of People's Artist of the USSR. He served on the jury of many international competitions and from 1974 until his death, he chaired the jury of the cello section of the Tchaikovsky Competition in Moscow.

For the last 10 years or so he gave master-classes all over Europe and in Japan. In 1995 he gave one at the Menuhin School in Stoke d'Abernon, Surrey, where reports were enthusiastic. He held strong views on the teaching of the present time: "I think many teachers today are obsessed with technical perfection and because they are not themselves aware of the importance of the emotional aspect of playing, they are unable to pass it on," he told me.

Although his playing was so passionate and charged with emotion, as a man he was courteous, rather reserved and possessed of an old-world charm. He will be remembered as one of the legends in a musical world dominated far too often by clinical perfection.

**Margaret Campbell**  
Daniil Shafran, cellist: born Petrograd 13 January 1923; married (one daughter); died Moscow 7 February 1997.



Shafran: "Have you ever seen moonlight?"

Photograph: Clive Berda

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## David Waller



Waller in the RSC's *The Comedy of Errors*. Photograph: Clive Berda

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He was born in Street in Somerset in 1920, the son of an architect who had been forced through ill-health to live a country life and, accordingly, became a market gardener. Waller went to a Quaker school in Yorkshire before training at the Embassy School of Acting in London, in 1937-38. His early professional life took him to the Old Vic Theatre, interspersed with engagements with various (mostly long-departed) repertory companies, including, in 1955, the Ipswich Arts Theatre Company.

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Just as with his father before him, heart disease led "Wall" to do less as the years passed. But, for me, he had become something of a surrogate father. I relied on his instincts and could sense his disapproval: his barometer of taste and mood was unfailing. His appetite for life and sense of fun belied his somewhat bank-managerial exterior; his generosity and passionate loyalty were surprising in one so outwardly reserved – his love of wife and home, of theatre and Shakespeare, of continuity and collaboration pulsed through his features in unexpected and unaccountable rushes of feeling that would embarrass him as much as they delighted his colleagues.

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Just as with his father before him, heart disease led "Wall" to do less as the years passed. But, for me, he had become something of a surrogate father. I relied on his instincts and could sense his disapproval: his barometer of taste and mood was unfailing. His appetite for life and sense of fun belied his somewhat bank-managerial exterior; his generosity and passionate loyalty were surprising in one so outwardly reserved – his love of wife and home, of theatre and Shakespeare, of continuity and collaboration pulsed through his features in unexpected and unaccountable rushes of feeling that would embarrass him as much as they delighted his colleagues.

**Trevor Nunn**  
David Waller, actor: born Street, Somerset 27 November 1920; married Elisabeth Vernon; died London 23 January 1997.

David Waller was, as Shakespeare says in *Coriolanus*, "a great sea mark", a rallying point, an example and a role model. His contribution as an actor to a great period in the history of the Royal Shakespeare Company, from the Sixties onwards, was immense and his benevolent and beneficent effect on all the people who knew him was palpable.

He was born in Street in Somerset in 1920, the son of an architect who had been forced through ill-health to live a country life and, accordingly, became a market gardener. Waller went to a Quaker school in Yorkshire before training at the Embassy School of Acting in London, in 1937-38. His early professional life took him to the Old Vic Theatre, interspersed with engagements with various (mostly long-departed) repertory companies, including, in 1955, the Ipswich Arts Theatre Company.

I was 15 when this new leading actor came to town. In truth, I had something of an entrance to the stage door of the intimate Ipswich Theatre because, only a little more than a year before, I had played a role there, which had been an ambition-shaping experience. So I felt like a partisan and possessive football supporter doubtfully weighing up the club's new signing.

Waller was fleshy and powerful, a centre-half not a centre-forward. But he took risks, he transformed himself and he made texts come alive. His crew-cut, brutal, sergeant-of-the-lance jaw wasn't Shakespeare recited, or spoken, or sung – it was Shakespeare lived, inhabited and transformed. And so I became his most passionate fan.

He was kindly and interested when submitting to my stage-door conversations and I was devastated when he told me that, though he hated the nomadic actor's life, he was moving on to previously grazed pastures at the Old Vic. Around this time, he experimented with directing and writing, and played small roles in the West End.

When a number of years later, in 1963, I was asked to direct my first professional production at the Belgrade Theatre in Coventry and I needed to cast the leading role of a dominating Welsh patriarch (very unsentimental, very funny), I proposed Waller and was stupefied to be told that he had left the theatre business altogether and was intending to run a travel agency.

After some pleading telephone calls, he agreed to give what he called "that awful business, the theatre" one more try. He was, as I expected, superb as the Father in Gwyn Thomas's *The Keep* and from that very springboard was launched a thrillingly demanding period of work together. His wife, Lys, moved to join him and we lived in adjoining flats in Coventry while Waller played parts like Azdak in *The Caucasian Chalk Circle*, Belch in *Twelfth Night*, Musgrave in *Sergeant Musgrave's Dance*, The Narrator in *Under Milk Wood*, and Trelawny in a version of *Treasure Island* which we wrote together. It couldn't last, of course, but the inevitable termination of this joyous period was Waller's elevation to the Royal Shakespeare Company, just a few miles down the road at Stratford. In 1966 he became an Associate Artist of the RSC, which was something of a dream come true.

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# Finally called to account for the BSE farce

It is possible to feel sorry for Douglas Hogg. A not especially remarkable Cabinet minister whose only purpose would have been to catch out trivia quiz contestants asked to list agricultural ministers. Memorable for his hats, a Grade II listed surname, for being married to a clever woman, and for having the misfortune to be holding the BSE parcel bomb when the music stopped.

But let us not allow sympathy to get in the way of retribution. Because it is right that the Government should be held to account for its handling of mad cow disease. For 10 years, it has been guilty of incompetence, complacency and cowardice. And the conventions of parliamentary accountability require Mr Hogg to take the rap, even though he has only been in charge for the last 18 months.

Labour is right to put down Monday's motion to reduce his salary - the polite way of calling for him to be sacked - and to make BSE an issue on which the Government could fall. It probably won't, but there would be a form of justice done if it did. Our only caviar is that Labour should have supported the Liberal Democrats when they put down exactly the same motion last year. That act of tribal small-mindedness weakens Mr Blair in Monday's vote. It adds to the impression that the Labour leader is making an opportunistic gesture. But just because

they did the wrong thing then does not mean they should be condemned for doing the right thing now.

So what is the case against the Government on BSE?

The possibility that the agents that cause mad cow disease might end up in beefburgers was first raised at the end of 1986. Mr Gummer's unwise publicity stunt in which he publicly fed a hamburger to his daughter Cordelia is one of the political images that will stick in our collective mind, and it contains an essential truth about the Government's attitude. Rather than err on the side of caution, Mr Gummer blithely asserted that, because no risk had been proved, there was no risk.

It is at this point in the argument that the stock response is usually deployed: Yes, but what would Labour have done? It usually emerges that Her Majesty's Opposition was either fast asleep on the job or ranting off at a tangent about something else entirely. Not in this case.

Step forward the unexpected figure of David Clark. Yes, him. Very probably there are members of his own family who don't know that he is a member of the Shadow Cabinet. But he is, and he was Mr Gummer's agricultural shadow. And his response to the possibility of BSE entering the human food chain was correct from the start. As a precautionary measure, he said, infected cattle should be

traced and related animals culled. Feeding them on minced sheep should be stopped. And research should be stepped up. We do not yet know how many people will die from the human variant of BSE, but prompt action then could well have saved some lives.

Why did the Government not act sooner? One of the more pathetic feats of ministerial self-justification came recently from David Willetts, the allegedly brainy Postmaster General. Modern British government, he wrote, is constrained by the "iron triangle" of the courts, European insti-

tutions and domestic interest groups. He was trying to explain the unfortunate appearance of government passivity in general, but his words stand as a poignant commentary on the BSE crisis in particular.

Now we as a newspaper are very much in favour of farmers. They grow and breed a lot of our food, and jolly good it (mostly) is. And, second only to the victims of the new strain of Creutzfeldt-Jakob Disease, they have borne the cost of the BSE crisis. But we see no reason why they should be singled out for vast amounts of taxpayer subsidy, especially when it is often

shaped precisely to encourage the kinds of intensive farming methods that threaten both our environment and, potentially, our health. And it is neither in farmers' long-term interest, nor that of the rest of the population, that they should exert so much influence on food policy.

So the most urgent of the fundamental lessons of the BSE crisis is that the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Foods should be abolished. Food safety should be the responsibility of the Department of Health, and the farming and fishing industries should be treated no differently from any other by the Department of Trade and Industry. So far, Labour has only proposed an "arm's-length" Food Standards Agency, which is not enough.

But Monday's vote is about the Government's record. For once, it is not a pointless Commons charade. There are good reasons of substance why honest, independent-minded MPs should vote against the Government on Monday. Tony Blair may have shied away from them yesterday, because he does not want to add to worries about British beef now that the Government has finally taken all the action it should have taken years ago. Instead, he chose to concentrate on John Major's foolish promise to get the European ban on British beef lifted by last November. That, and the

Prime Minister's petulant policy of non-co-operation with Brussels, should be condemned. But the real charge is that, bowing to farming interests, this Government needlessly endangered the health of its citizens a long time ago. This whole sorry tale has been one of accumulated mismanagement from start to finish.

## The price of free speech

Salman Rushdie demonstrated his courage by making a joke of it - "just a cost of living increase" he said of the additional half a million dollars an Iranian religious foundation has added to the price on his head. In his plight, the author deserves support from the British government. The Foreign Office needs to state clearly that the Iranian government holds responsibility for any and all threats uttered from within that state, whether the voices claim to be religious authorities or no. Iran cannot be admitted to open international conversation unless and until the threat is lifted. The Home Office should re-commit itself to Mr Rushdie's protection. Politicians may sometimes forget it, but freedom of speech is one of the most important freedoms they uphold.

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

### Scots, English and a leap in the dark

Sir: I hope Andrew Marr was not suggesting ("England, stop whingeing about a Scottish parliament", 12 February) that Scotland does not benefit in terms of fiscal transfers from her membership of the UK, for she most emphatically and quite properly does. Like many radical devolutionaries, he tries to minimise the scale of this advantage and perjure the standard SNP myth that it is actually wealthy people in the Home Counties who enjoy the greatest "subsidies" from the state. He even distorts one of the SNP's greatest hits from the 1970s: "It's Scotland's Oil".

He wants a Scottish parliament, moreover, on the rather Islingtonian grounds that "what we need in Britain... is more diversity and experiment, not less". And so the people of Scotland are to be used as constitutional guinea pigs simply because we are bored with the old order.

The point is not that English people are "whingeing", but that the business of arranging a new constitutional settlement for Scotland is so transparently a vexed and uncertain affair. With Scottish vital interests at stake, honest analysis will serve us all better than urging Scotland to take a great leap forward into the dark.

JAMES MURPHY  
London NW5

Sir: In your report " Tories threaten to make the Scots pay up" (11 February) you refer to Conservative propaganda that there is more "identifiable" government spending per head in Scotland than in England, with the implication that this is some sort of "benefit" bestowed on the Scots by virtue of the Union.

A more accurate picture will be obtained if revenue raising is also considered. Last month the Chief Secretary to the Treasury, William Waldegrave, admitted in a parliamentary written answer that, taking oil revenues into account, Scotland has paid a massive £27bn absolute surplus into the London Treasury since 1979. This is the equivalent of £5,400 for every person in Scotland.

JOE TAYLOR  
Brighton, East Sussex

Sir: By all means reduce the numbers of Scottish MPs at Westminster. Scotland is, after all, over-represented. But that will not solve the West Lothian problem, for which the only solution would be complete exclusion while any English, Welsh or Irish business was on the agenda. Something that could be arranged quite simply if Scottish MPs were required to sit in both regional and UK parliament.

But it is invidious to give the five million inhabitants of Scotland a parliament of their own when a greater number of Londoners do not have and forum to call their own. Regional parliaments for the rest of the UK is an equitable solution and, if MPs are elected to sit in both parliaments, one that will seriously limit over-indulgence in non-productive waffle.

ROGER CHAPMAN  
Knapley, West Yorkshire

Sir: Following the ill-advised comments of Stephen Dorrell, the debate on the merits of devolution has focused exclusively on Scotland's future.

On the same day that the Health Secretary's remarks were causing an



uproar, nearly 100 people prominent in Welsh life (from business figures, academics, and religious figures) through to celebrities from the worlds of sport, music and the stage) launched a new campaign. Our aim is to achieve a resounding "yes" vote in the referendum which we, as well as the Scots, have been promised following a change of government.

We have launched a non-party political campaign in advance of the election because we feel that there is a need to take the focus on devolution away from politicians and aim it at ordinary people, the vast majority of whom are members of no political party. The wrangling of recent days proves such an approach is sorely needed.

DARAN HILL  
Organiser  
Yes for Wales campaign  
Cardiff

### Historic archives under hammer

Sir: Your report on the sale of Marconi archive material (10 February), coming so soon after the sale of Brunel material last November, raises once again the urgent need to protect our national heritage archives from loss by dispersal.

It is clear that there is a continuing hemorrhage of historically valuable documents through random sale to the highest bidder, and that there is a need for an agency to control such degeneration of the national heritage. Such an agency, preferably part of a government department, would aim at identifying the owners of archival material with high heritage value;

advising them about appropriate national repositories to which it might be sold, if not actually donated; arranging for independent valuation of such collections; and facilitating the flow of heritage funds for the acquisition of archives by approved institutions.

By firm but judicious action such an agency could rapidly improve the condition of our heritage archives, and establish public access to them for posterity.

RANGUS BUCHANAN  
Emeritus Professor of the History of Technology  
School of Social Sciences  
University of Bath

### Proud of our rave in the nave

Sir: There is a lot of truth in Andrew Brown's article "Runcie and the long melancholy roar" (10 February) and a lot of fear in the criticisms of modern worship.

I am proud that I chaired the committee that introduced "Rave in the Nave" at Ely Cathedral at the beginning of this decade, but it is no threat to my four rural churches and their congregations. It is a successful annual event which draws young people (and some older ones) and aims to support their daily and weekly Christian worship.

However, few local churches can put on a professional and exciting youth service. In the main the staple diet of young and old will continue to be more or less traditional worship.

The cause for the sudden drop in attendance this year in the Anglican Church is something for which young people can reject all blame. Those under 23 have not voted for this government. Its deregulation and desecration of Sunday, and the policies that have undermined the family, mean that many of my church members no longer attend weekly.

Those in church have often had to make a massive effort to get there. If they are rewarded with an annual dose of worship which is relevant, different, exciting and challenging, they deserve it.

Rev STEPHEN LEEKE  
Warboys, Cambridgeshire

### Sudden approach of lawless cyclists

Sir: Helen Newton (letter, 10 February) is "puzzled" by bridge path cyclists who encounter the kind of rudeness from walkers that she never seems to receive as a long distance horse-ride.

K J McLean (letter, 3 February), may well give what he calls a "salutation" to pedestrians exercising their right to walk. It would be much better if the possessed, as is required by law, a bicycle bell, a polite tinkle on which would advise walkers of his approach, hopefully at a reasonable speed. No "salutation" or similar gesture will appease the irritation we pedestrians suffer upon being suddenly quietly overtaken by a cyclist who ignores the laws of the land, whether it be on bridge path or pavement.

"Polite behaviour" has long vanished among the cycling fraternity.

ERNE SEARS  
Netley Abbey,  
Hampshire

Sir: Guy Davies suggests that, if Kenneth Wilson no longer believes the Bible is true, he should leave the priesthood and renounce Christianity, and he adds that "perhaps the Rationalist Press Association would give him a job".

I am afraid we have no vacancies at the moment, but the idea isn't as silly as it may seem. We have always had friendly relations with progressive elements of various denominations, several members throughout the century of our existence have been clergymen, one of our leading figures during the first half of the century was the former Roman Catholic priest, Joseph McCabe, and one of our present directors is a former Anglican priest.

A main strand of the freethought movement has always been rational criticism of the Bible and indeed of all religious scriptures and doctrines, and we welcome the very significant work done in this area by protagonists of "Liberal Christianity", which we at least would never stoop to describing as "intellectually dishonest".

NICOLAS WALTER  
Rationalist Press Association  
London N1

### Tory message

Sir: At last (report, 12 February) the Tories have come up with a meaningful slogan: "Mayday! Mayday!"

COLIN M CAMPBELL  
Edinburgh

### No sale

Sir: Your report "Lobbyist offers his memoirs for sale" (13 February) is wholly inaccurate insofar as your references to HarperCollins are concerned. HarperCollins decided not to publish Ian Greer's book because we could not see any commercial justification for doing so. In short, we did not think it would make money.

EDDIE BELL  
Executive Chairman and Publisher  
HarperCollins Publishers  
London W6

### Post haste

Sir: My experience has, unfortunately, been exactly the opposite of your correspondent's ("Greetings cards always delayed", Letters, 12 February). I posted a Valentine's card to my fiancée in Vancouver last Saturday and was told at the Post Office counter that it might get there by Friday.

However, she sent me an e-mail on Tuesday, saying she had already received it.

TIM SHORT  
Reading,  
Berkshire



Fergie  
figure  
world

In his third and final report on Northern Ireland, *The Independent's* award-winning war reporter **Robert Fisk** goes in search of the dividing line that symbolises the island's lingering torment

The Londonderry man was silent for a long time. The parallels were astonishing, but the two bloodbaths were exclusive

to their countries. So all the man said was: "Jesus Christ!"

It is a oame much invoked on the Loodoodery memorials. The most dramatic of these is a simple granite cross erected to the memory of the 13 - Duddy, Doherty, McGuigan, Gilmore, McElhinooey, McDaid, Nash, Young, Kely, Wray, Donaghy and two McKinnies - "murdered by British paratroopers on Bloody Sunday 30 January 1972". Beside it, someone has scribbled a note: "All we need is the truth to help heal the wounds."

The truth. That is all the people of Qana were demanding last April after Israeli shells

slaughtered 101 civilians sheltering in the UN compound. And I rather think the parallels here may be closer. The Israelis said they were shooting back at Hizbollah, just as the British paratroopers claimed they were shooting back at the IRA. There was an international outcry against the massacre but the Israelis insisted the killings were not deliberate, blaming them on the local gunmen, even on the dead themselves for tolerating the Hizbollah in their midst. Just as the British ignored

sible to avoid in Northern Ireland today when even the Protestant *Newsletter*—the oldest daily paper in the kingdom—demands an official apology to the families of the victims. By lying about what they could see—the Israelis at first denied there was a pilotless reconnaissance aircraft over Qana—Israel gave the Hizbollah its biggest propaganda victory in 14 years. By refusing to admit the truth—that the British Army had committed an atrocity in Londonderry in 1972

Ireland, John Hume, sick, nervous, popping the occasional pill for his fearful headaches, laments every memory of past violence. As his "peace process" - initiated with great courage after long talks with Gerry Adams - slowly disintegrates, he fears each oath reminder of the past, the tensions raised by the Bloody Sunday anniversary, even the appearance at this critical moment of Neil Jordan's film *Michael Collins*.

But his mind races brilliantly on, ever broader as the chances of peace narrow: "The model of the European Union should be the model for our healing

Not that Bishop Daly is any friend of the IRA. He has been cursed for his condemnation of human wickedness, for refusing to allow IRA funerals near his church. "There

When I asked the priest how long it might therefore be before the minority became the majority, he said, matter-of-factly: "Twenty-five years!" Another quarter of a century and that elusive border would disappear. But was this what it was all about? I recalled that the writer Ulick O'Connor had once told me of how an RUC officer had arrested Brendan Behan when he found him on his hands and knees on the road south of Newry. "What are you doing?" the policeman had asked the playwright. "Trying to find the feckin' border," Behan had retorted. And so I decided

**peace  
cess  
going  
here?  
p Daily**

Just beyond, so my map suggested, was the border. But I couldn't find it. I did see an Irish Garda officer on the County Doogeal side of the frontier. Where exactly was the border, I asked him? There was a bold laugh. "I really don't know for certain because I've never walked further than this," he replied. "They say it's the stream over there and I've been told it runs behind that house." I knocked on the door of the cottage. It was deserted, the wind blowing softly through the trees beside it.

I knelt down on the road surface, Behan-like, and could faintly detect a very slight change in the tarmacadam, perhaps a millimetre difference in the height of the kerbstones. Was this the border?

Behind me, in what must still have been Northern Ireland, was a caravan beside the road. Three children, their mother and father, squashed themselves to the window. They had come from Armagh, the man said. So where, I asked them, was the border? "They say it's along that ditch to the right of the road," the man said to me, rubbing his eyes in the cold air coming through his caravan window. "But if you want to know where the real border is, it's here." And he tapped his right forefinger on his head, so loudly that I could hear it banging against his skull.

# mobiles

Reading, another man got in and sat with us. My friend offered him some Scotch. He refused. He got out a mobile phone. He hunched up his shoulders to signify isolation and made as if to dial.

"Bloody hell," said Tuffy (which he had told me was his name). "He's got a fuppie phone. Or don't we use that word any more?"

"What word?" I said.  
"Yuppie," said Taffy. "Is the word 'Yuppie' too Eighties? Is the word dead now? And if there are still as many people as Yuppies, what's the Nineties word for it? I appeal to our friend with the yuppie phone. What do you think?"

Our friend with the flipper phone, who had been listening to this with some amusement, put down the phone and joined in our conversation. By the time we got to Faddington we were all friends for life. I submit with respect that none of this would have happened on a plane or in a taxi, only on a train.

Well, that's it. I rest my case, wherever it was, and a happy St Valentine's Day to you all.

# Who

At the crossroads in Labour's future, the struggle on the roadward trail to Douglas Haig, it is more than a triumph of the unknown. What has the future got us? How could it have been avoided?

It is the embittered, aggressive mindless thrust, it was called, of those who, two weeks ago, stood at the annual meeting of the National Farmers' Union.

The fact that it had continued 15 years on the same related conditions, equivalent to 2p in the pound, was not the issue. The issue included money spent on the past 11 months of inflation alone, and money that will be spent over the next three years.

Mr Haig had not been through several other, equally charged, issues, the 10 deaths of British Laker. This was the crucial and fatal moment, a scientific advance to the point of no return.

So he kept himself to his main theme and abstinently from being interrupted. There is a danger here, Mr Haig said, that the 1958 crisis, having taken the minority out, might encourage those already struggling to ally forces to kill themselves.

And there are others, much more far-reaching, even larger. The 1950s may end, the summer of 1956, with the best of us, and the all-time low when Britain's relations



**“The peace process isn't going anywhere,” Bishop Daly**

Thick, brittle, discoloured toenails may be caused by a fungal infection. For a free leaflet and advice on how they can be cured write to FREEPOST STEPWEE, Dept. IN 140297, PO BOX 5314, London W6 0GQ, or call FREEPHONE 0800 200 210.

**FREEPHONE 0800 200 210**

**A**s nohndy, Heaven be praised, has offered me money to print their St Valentine's Day greetings in this column, I shall be forced to talk about something else instead, and I think it is going to be about talking to people on trains.

Do you talk to people on trains? I do. It's one of the chief pleasures of travelling by train.

Same with phones on trains. I was on a train home from Paddington the other day, and a couple of seats behind me was an infuriating woman who launched into long, loud conversations on her phone about business life, the next day's meetings, office gossip, and so on, and when she was tired of talking to one person she rang another and *had exactly the same conversation all over again*. You could feel the whole carriage silently seething as they tried to ignore her, until finally I couldn't bear it any longer and I got up and turned round and said to her very forcibly and audibly:

"If you have to talk so loudly, could you PLEASE have more interesting conversations?"

Though I say it myself, I thought that was quite a snappy line. It did not, however, have the desired squashing effect on her. She looked murderous daggers back at me and said: "If you don't like it, you can always move somewhere else."

At this point I should have said, "I'm afraid there aren't enough empty seats in the



**Miles Kington**

train for all of us to move to," but I didn't think of this till later, and just sat down fuming. Luckily she scored an own goal now, because she turned back to her phone and said to her unseen friend: "Sorry about that, but there's a hloke on the train who says I'm talking too loud." At which a chorus of passengers' voices arose around me, saying: "He's not the only one," and although she outwardly paid no heed to this, her voice suddenly went very soft and quiet and we all smiled at each other

because we knew we had won. Satisfying at the time, I suppose, but train conversations shouldn't be a matter of winning and losing. They should be gentle things, rising and falling like breathing. The next time I got on the train at Bath to go to Paddington I sat opposite an old bloke who didn't look like much until he produced a small flask and said: "Don't think I can get this tea down unless it's got some whisky in it," and poured a slug of Scotch in his tea. "Want some?" he said.

"Don't think I could face  
Scotland before I am," I said  
politely.

"I beg to differ," he said,  
and we were off on a long  
circumambulatory  
conversation which lasted  
from Bath to Didcot and  
which ranged over prisons  
(he had been a policeman  
before retiring), racial  
prejudice (he was Welsh),  
strangely boring seaside  
towns (he lived in Weston-  
super-Mare) and so on. I was  
actually meant to be working  
on the train but this was  
more fun, and by the time we  
got to Reading we were  
affable buddies. There

Reading, another man got in and sat with us. My friend offered him some Scotch. He said, "He's got out a mobile phone. He's hooked up his shoulders to signify isolation and made as if to dial. "Bloody hell," said Buffy (which he had told me was his name). "He's got a Yuppie phone. Or don't we see that word any more?" "What word?" I said. "Yuppie," said Buffy. "Is the word 'Yuppie' too right?" he said. "Is the word dead now? And if there are still as much people as Yuppies, what is the Nineties word for it? I appeal to our friend with the Yuppie phone. What do you think?"

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Well, that's it. I rest my case, whatever it was, and a happy St Valentine's Day to all.



## Fergie – the ideal figure for the new world economy

How many people in this country, facing bankruptcy, could go out and earn between £4m and £5m in just a few months to help pay off their debts?

Well, there is one and her name is Sarah Ferguson. We have become so accustomed to joking about the Duchess of York or rushing to judgement about her antics that we miss something much more important. This is the astonishing scale of her achievement, and more particularly what it says about the changing nature of the global economy.

She demonstrates five important changing features of the world economy: the growth in demand for celebrities and the complex nature of that form of human capital; the need for global branding; the fact that increasingly men and women will compete on a level economic playing field; the need for entrepreneurship; and the importance of the English language.

The £4-5m is an estimate but will be not too far out and is quite stunning: more than £2m from an autobiography; £1m from a Weight Watchers; £500,000 from advertising cranberry juice in the US; interviews, advances on children's books and Hello! deals; another £600,000; £100,000 from an Austrian construction mogul; plus various odds and ends, mostly product promotions.

The starting point here is the trend towards celebration of the world economy. They are everywhere. Turn on the TV and there will be some sportsperson endorsing a pizza; a chat-show hostess saying some (actually very boring) car is wonderful. By what? What is the need for these people to be paid to say these words?

The answer is that in a world of infinite information the obvious way for a company to get across a commercial message is to employ a well-known human being to say it. Sometimes the ad people think of something new and clever, but it is a sight easier to hire a celeb.

Fergie is a brilliant celeb for two reasons: royalty and frailty. She is – or at least has been – a royal and the UK-royal family is currently at the top of the global celeb food chain. But that alone would not be enough; it would not sell much cranberry juice in the US to have, say, Prince Edward doing the ad. Humility is attractive; look at the way Hugh Grant's feet shot up after his indiscretion on Sunset Boulevard, or how Bill Clinton's trouser-zip problem may even have enhanced his appeal among women. The counterpoint between Sarah Ferguson's human failings and her openness on the one hand, and the stuffy traditional image of the UK royals on the other, happens to make her very valuable.

And valuable not so much in the UK, which is not in world terms a very important market; she is that rare thing, a recognisable global celebrity. If it is hard to build up a



Hamish McRae

She's the perfect late Nineties brand: she's a woman, a celebrity and she speaks English

national brand, think how much harder it is to build an international one. The only British brand that is really making much headway globally at the moment is Virgin, and look at the things Richard Branson has to do to get publicity. Achieving global brand recognition is particularly important in things like films and books. Anyone who has published a book in global markets will know that total world sales can be 10 times UK sales. Fergie's autobiography (her biggest single deal) should sell well in all markets simply because, like Branson, she is a global brand.

She is also a woman. In most forms of economic activity men still get paid more than women doing the same job. But there are signs that at the top of the skill range – top sportspeople, celeb authors, pop stars – the differences are becoming narrower. If the quality that determines success is office politics, men will probably win. If it is ability to generate publicity, the playing field is more even, as the Spice Girls are now proving in America. If they do hit Number One in the charts with *Wannabe*, which now looks likely, they will have done something that neither Blur nor Oasis have yet managed. I cannot prove it, but I suspect that it would have been impossible, had the positions been reversed, for the Duke of York to have earned money as fast as his former wife. His gender would have been against him.

Next, there is the English language. Fergie is an Anglo-American product. She is an Anglo but behaves like an American. That not only gains access to the much bigger market, but also is a springboard for exports to the rest of the world. The world buys American popular culture (and to a much lesser extent, British culture) in a way that America and Britain do not buy, say, French, German or Japanese culture. Some of us may have seen the odd French or Italian film in the last year or maybe read the odd non-English book in translation. But with the occasional exception the sales are tiny. English-language culture is a one-way street.

Had Fergie been Japanese or Norwegian, she would not have been able to export her skills so readily. The English-language base is absolutely crucial to her success.

Finally, Fergie is a fascinating example of the importance of entrepreneurship. She hasn't made this money by working in a multinational or qualifying as a lawyer. Nobody has employed her. It is pure entrepreneurship: seeing an opportunity to sell a service and developing the service to fit the market. Go back 20 years and it would have been unthinkable. Nobody told her to do it. We seem again to have become a nation of go-getters. So the whiffwind £5m, or whatever it turns out to be, tells us something remarkable about Fergie, but it also says something remarkable about the way money is increasingly earned in the world.

## Nanny may not know best, but she's cheap

by Suzanne Moore

No one needs special qualifications to become a parent yet following the death of a nine-month-old American baby at the hands of British au pair Louise Woodward, everyone is asking who is properly qualified to care for children.

This story is a tragedy for all concerned. An inexperienced 18-year-old loses her patience with a crying baby in her care and shakes him. He dies as a result of a "traumatic haemorrhage" and she now faces a murder charge. Her father flies out to Boston and fails to raise the \$100,000 bail money, while her traumatised mother sits in shock, telling reporters "I can't imagine how her parents must feel. I have already lost my daughter – but I have at least got the hope of getting her back."

How could this have happened? Everyone who has left a child in the care of a child-minder, an au pair, or baby-sitter – that is, most of us – will sleep less easily. Everyone is relating stories of dodgy nannies and irresponsible au pairs, of young women like Louise Woodward who we can see in retrospect were ill-equipped to care for infants. Checklists have been provided for prospective employers so that we might ask the right questions, get the right references, make sure they have the right qualifications before we leave them in sole charge of our off spring.

An au pair is often employed on the basis of a letter alone. No meeting takes place until they turn up with their rucksack. I once asked a prospective au pair if she liked children. She replied "No". When I asked her if there was anything that she wanted to ask me, she said: "Can you get me a boyfriend?"

All this advice however, may help relieve our anxiety but it won't change the basic reality – that we want those who look after our children to be highly skilled, yet we don't want to pay them much money to do it. Our children may be precious but we leave them in the care of those who get paid far less than any proposed minimum wage. This is a catch-22: if child care became more expensive, many women could simply not afford to work in the first place.

It is working women, who as we know are already under attack from all sides, whose guilt and fear will be played upon by the Louise Woodward story.

Yet the couple who employed this girl were high earners. Sunil Eapen is an anaesthesiologist, his wife Deborah an ophthalmologist. For all their "ologies", like many in their situation they must have decided to spend only a small proportion of their income on child care. This is not unusual but it reflects our contradictory expectations about what it takes and what it costs to look after small children.

The assumption is that young women will be able to look after babies merely on the grounds of their gender. Their experience may be limited to baby-sitting, which often involves sitting in a house after the children have already gone to bed. We assume that girls will have had



It takes a case like the New York au pair tragedy to remind us of the value of good child care. But are we prepared to pay for it?

experience of looking after babies when clearly most have not. This may have been the case in the days of the extended family but not any more.

The first baby I ever held was my own. We had been prepared for this at antenatal classes by bathing dolls but this was about as much use as our preparation for childbirth, which involved a midwife pushing a tennis ball through a pretend uterus that was knitted out of navy blue wool. "Sorry," she said at the time, "I ran out of pink."

The idea that one can be fully prepared for parenthood may

be a myth but we are on the whole deeply ambivalent about what caring for children is about. On the one hand it is entirely natural: anyone (except, it seems, men) can do it, and as it is common sense, it not given much status. Girls who do not achieve much academically are siphoned off as nursery nurses. On the other hand, all social classes are bombarded with instructions on how to improve their parenting skills.

Books are being published at a furious rate on how to produce "emotionally intelligent children", on how to make

wrong to remind us how valuable a job it is. And we want to decide whether we have to pay the price. The prioritising of education is increasingly without decent and subsidised nursery provision and that provision must start way before the age of four. Many women will continue to manage as they do now by swapping child care with friends and family. This costs nothing and is often preferable to a deregulated market which dictates that child care can be done on the cheap. We can't be surprised that sometimes you get what you pay for.

## Who deserves censure for BSE?

No less than six agricultural ministers did too little, too late, says Nicholas Schoon

As the cross hairs in Labour's rifle sights settle on the fedora'd head of Douglas Hogg, it is time once more to attempt a ready reckoning. What has the BSE crisis cost us? How could it have been avoided?

It was the embattled agriculture minister himself who boasted about the awesome scale of those costs last week, in a coolly received speech to the annual general meeting of the National Farmers Union.

The Government had committed £3.3bn on BSE-related expenditure, "equivalent to 2p on income tax", he said. The figure includes money spent over the past 11 months of full-blown crisis, and money which will be spent over the next three years.

But Mr Hogg did not mention several other, equally colossal figures – the 15 deaths so far put down to new variant Creutzfeldt-Jakob Disease (CJD), the cruel and lethal brain affliction that the Government's scientific advisers ascribe to eating BSE-contaminated beef.

No one has kept count of how many farms and abattoirs have been bankrupted. There is no precise figure for farm suicides related to the BSE crisis, although coroners have been hearing that the uncertainty and hardship engendered drove several already struggling cattle farmers to kill themselves.

And there are other, much vaguer but perhaps even larger, costs. Historians may one day mark the summer of 1996, with the beef crisis and the ill-tempered Florence summit, as the time when Britain's relations

with the EU soured decisively. And what of the cattle themselves? Old dairy cows used to be slaughtered to make low-grade beef products, like burgers and pies. Now more than one million of them have been turned into great piles of dust under the "Over Thirty Month Scheme". Rendered-down meat and bone meal, and great vats of molten fat or tallow are stored in warehouses around the country.

These materials can't be dumped in landfill sites because they contain tiny quantities of prion protein, the mysterious, extraordinarily robust molecule that has caused the epidemic. The Government is still trying to work out how to burn the stuff.

Some 500,000 baby male calves, just a few days old, have also been slaughtered because the European Union ban on British beef exports wiped out the market for them. They used to be exported to the Continent, to be confined in veal crates for a short life before slaughter, a practice that led to mass protests at places like Brightlingsea. Now they are slaughtered even younger and farmers are compensated for each purposeless death.

At the moment, the best guess must be that we are at the beginning of the end of the crisis. Hopefully, the number of new variant CJD cases will run into a few dozen a year at most, rather than hundreds or thousands. But this is still only a hope, not a likelihood, and no scientist who knows what she or he is talking about would dream of making a precise estimate.

British farming and British meat have clearly survived the



An infected cow is taken away for incineration. Brian Harris

European ban and the damage to public confidence in pretty good shape, thanks to huge dollops of taxpayer subsidy. As Mr Hogg told farmers last week, prices in livestock markets have largely recovered and household consumption of the best beef cuts is now almost back at its pre-crisis levels.

With the Government belatedly implementing the selective cull of cattle, the only unfulfilled promise from the Florence EU summit, the conditions are theoretically in place for the rest of Europe to lift the

export ban. But this won't happen for months if not years, because continental politicians know their voters would never stand for it.

But at least Britain is belatedly completing its part of the Florence bargain. This will kill a further 100,000 or so cattle, in addition to the 1.2 million slaughtered under the Over Thirty Month Scheme.

Ministry of Agriculture vets are now scouring Britain's farms, selecting older surviving cattle that once belonged to herds where other animals

came down with BSE.

These are, essentially, confidence-building moves. They will kill a few older cattle that would have come down with BSE but will do very little, if anything, to protect human health because there is already a ban on meat from cattle over 30 months old going into the human food chain.

With the clarity of hindsight, we can all see that again and again government did too little, too late over the last 10 years – and six agriculture ministers – since Ministry scientists first diagnosed the new disease in cattle. It gave too much weight to the immediate worries of farmers and the food industry; and it downplayed fears, so as not to scare consumers. If only they had publicised their worries, some people who have since contracted new variant CJD from eating infected meat might have avoided doing so and be alive today.

Perhaps its biggest failure, in a time of deregulation and declining state intervention, was not to enforce the successive regulations it decreed to stop BSE-contaminated products being eaten by humans and cattle. This is the view of Professor John Patison, Dean of University College, London Medical School and chairman of the Government's leading advisory committee on BSE. "The principles of what we did have been correct. The enforcement left something to be desired."

But even if everything that the scientists advising the Government had recommended had been implemented ruthlessly, there might well have been some new variant CJD

deaths in humans. It may well be that the fatal doses of prion protein were taken in by humans nearly 10 years ago, during the earliest period of the BSE epidemic in cattle.

Of course it could have been avoided if the original sin of feeding ground-up cattle and sheep remains to cattle had never been allowed; these days, it is banned for cows and all other animals. But the practice dates back decades and was never questioned by a public who, by and large, did not want to know the grisly details of how they got their mass-produced food. It was a practice which happened in several other countries as well as Britain.

The mystery, still unsolved, is why it led to such a large epidemic only here.

Mr Hogg is fair game and Labour's decision to gun for him on Monday is understandable, reasonable, realistic. Of course it's nothing personal; the man himself is a mere cypher for the Government's overall failure in tackling the crisis – the long, slow build-up to the announcement of the CJD link last March and the hurricane that has blown ever since. He is inclined to bumptiousness in public, and it was unwise of him to refuse to attend the European Parliament's inquiry into the crisis. But his real offence is to have been the Government's front man when things went really wrong.

Labour, however, ought to pray that it is never challenged by a crisis which is so far-reaching, challenging and as bewilderingly complex as BSE. Frankly, any government would be found wanting.

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# business & city

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## Talk of £1.3bn bid by Williams key to leap in Chubb shares

Tom Stevenson  
City Editor

Williams Holdings was last night tipped to launch a £1.3bn recommended offer for locks and alarms group Chubb today, five years after it made an unsuccessful £700m bid for the company's former parent Rascal. Expectations of a bid from the conglomerate, whose own security arm owns the Yale brand,

sent Chubb's shares soaring. Chubb provoked intense speculation yesterday when it issued a statement saying it was in talks that might lead to an offer being made for the company at up to 450p a share but refused to name the bidder. In the market the shares closed 79p higher at 420p, their highest level for three years.

Analysts said a bid for the company was not unexpected

following disappointing recent results and speculation immediately focused on a handful of potential buyers including Rascal, Ingersoll-Rand, Tyco and Republic Industries. After strong profits growth following Chubb's demerger from Rascal in 1991, the company had recently failed to live up to earlier expectations.

One analyst said the sale was another example of chairman

Sir Ernest Harrison's focus on creating shareholder value. Following the successful demerger of Rascal, Sir Ernest had spun off Chubb and installed David Peacock as chief executive with a remit to cut costs. Now that process was largely complete, a disposal of the company was the logical next step, the analyst added.

Chubb, with sales of about

£1bn, has an attractive share of the estimated £25bn worldwide market for electronic and physical security. It has faced difficulties, however, in moving from the relatively low-growth markets of the developed economies to regions with more exciting growth prospects such as China, where the security business is starting more or less from scratch.

Williams has interests in the

Far East with its security and fire prevention operations, the two legs of its business it plans to grow at the expense of its low-growth building materials division, the UK part of which it recently sold for £303m.

Although analysts thought a bid from Williams would make strong commercial sense, some questioned whether it would want to make such a large acquisition after recent comments

suggesting it planned to spend about £500m on infill purchases. Williams has also indicated it would not issue further new shares to finance its ongoing expansion.

Buying Chubb now, however, was viewed as an opportunistic time to make a bid for a company which will not see the benefit of recent acquisitions for up to two years.

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## SEA bars Crook from UK trading

John Willcock

David Crook, a former senior trader with a merchant bank, has been banned from doing investment business by City watchdogs for the "grossly improper" transfer of \$70,000 of the bank's money to an associate of his in Zimbabwe.

Mr Crook joined Henry Ansbacher three years ago as a senior dealer in South African government bonds and gold shares. Yesterday he was expelled from the register of the Securities and Futures Authority (SFA), which will bar him from trading in the UK. He has also been ordered to pay the SFA costs of £8,500.

An SFA tribunal found that Mr Crook had "consistently and repeatedly lied or resorted to half-truths" during interviews with the regulator about his bank accounts.

Ansbacher is owned by South Africa's First National Bank of Southern Africa and has been reprimanded, fined £20,000 and required to pay costs of £5,400, the SFA said. A spokesman for Ansbacher said: "No comment."

The SFA has handed details of Mr Crook's case to the City of London Police. The police were unable yesterday to confirm whether or not they were investigating Mr Crook. A spokesman for the SFA said yesterday: "I am not saying that our case against Mr Crook involved around £70,000, but the circumstances of the case automatically put it into the 'notify police' category."

Mr Crook, a South African national, joined Ansbacher in April 1994. The following August, while the manager in charge of deal settlements was on holiday, Mr Crook made a payment of \$70,000 by pretending that these were funds needed by a new trading account opened by Ansbacher with another firm.

The SFA says: "In fact no such account existed, and the payment was really an unauthorised transfer of funds to an associate of Mr Crook in Zimbabwe."

When the settlements manager returned from holiday he realised that this payment had not been properly authorised. The SFA was told about the deal by the bank in June 1995, by which time Mr Crook had been suspended. He had also repaid the \$70,000 by borrowing the money personally. He was later sacked for "gross misconduct".

Discounts affair at Penguin deals another blow to conglomerate but Scardino insists she is getting to grips with problems

## US accounts scandal costs Pearson £100m

Nigel Cope

Pearson, the sprawling media conglomerate, yesterday revealed that it had fallen victim to a complex accounting scandal which will force the group to take a £100m charge against its 1996 financial results.

The irregularities centre on Penguin Books in America where a rogue individual in the accounts department had been secretly giving unauthorised discounts to retailers in return for early payment. Stretching back to 1991 the irregularities involved what Pearson described as "an accounting web of breathtaking complexity." It is thought that the irregularities covered a significant proportion of Penguin USA's book sales.

Following heavy losses at Mindspace, the US software house acquired by Pearson in 1994, the Penguin problems cast fresh doubts on Pearson's ability to run businesses in America. Analysts said the scandal would also make Pearson more vulnerable to a break-up bid as predators seek to unlock the value of its disparate interests which range from Lazzards, the merchant bank, to Madame Tussauds.

"The more they [Pearson] disinvest, the more people expect someone to bid for them," said Anthony de Lurriaga, media analyst at Panmure Gordon. After sharp falls following the announcement, Pearson shares recovered to close 14p lower at 749.5p supported by takeover speculation.

The scandal is a huge blow to Marjorie Scardino, who only joined Pearson as chief executive last month. Yesterday, she stressed that the scandal did not affect the underlying profitability of Pearson and that the prompt action by new management showed that Pearson was getting to grips with the problems.

"This is still a strong company and I have been very impressed with the quality of the management in most of the divisions," she said.

The accounting scandal arose at Penguin USA's accounting functions in Bergenfield, New Jersey. Pearson claims one person involved in the accounts receivable division started offering discounts to retailers in 1991 in return for early payment. The discounts averaged 5-7 per cent.

The employee was not at senior level nor paid a high salary. Though bonuses were payable Pearson claim there was no financial motive for the employee's action. It says the individual thought their job was to ensure prompt payment from customers and that success in this area would be welcomed by bosses.

Rumours had been circulating in the book trade that Penguin's US profits may have been overstated. "In recent years it has surprised many in the industry the way Penguin in the US has been able to fulfil very demanding financial targets from Pearson," said a senior figure in the book trade who has dealt with the publisher.

Pearson said that the complex environment of a publishing house, where huge numbers of

invoices were circulated, made it relatively easy for a determined individual to deceive management and the auditors.

"This person was very sophisticated at moving sums of money around the system," Pearson said. One industry expert said Penguin's problem was not likely to affect the UK division, where operations were tighter.

The scandal was uncovered by Michael Lynton, who took over as chairman and chief executive in January having replaced Peter Mayer who retired.

He discovered the irregularities when varying terms of trade with retailers emerged following the merger of Penguin USA with Putnam Berkley in 1995. Pearson says the accounting practices were stopped immediately on discovery and have not been taking place at any other Penguin businesses outside the US or at Putnam.

"Those found responsible have been and will be appropriately dealt with," Pearson said yesterday. The individual responsible for the scandal was fired earlier this month. The company did not say if it would press for fraud charges.

Legal action against the former auditors Arthur Andersen is possible, though the company would not comment yesterday. Pearson has launched a full investigation led by its lawyers and its recently appointed auditors, Price Waterhouse.

It is possible that Pearson may be forced to make payments to retailers who were not given discounts.

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Riding the storm: Despite the scandal Marjorie Scardino, Pearson's new chief executive (pictured with the chairman Dennis Stevenson), said the conglomerate's underlying profitability would be unaffected. Photograph: Peter Macdiarmid

## A success story in paperback

Patrick Toohar

Penguin is more than just one of the most venerable names in the book publishing world. It is an august institution - albeit one now tainted with the whiff of scandal.

Established in 1935 to help educate the masses with inexpensive paperbacks of classics, Penguin has grown to become the largest consumer book publisher in the UK and number four in the US, with global sales of £369m and profits of £33.6m in 1995. It is also the leading publisher of children's books in the UK, using the famous Ladybird imprint.

Yet its financial fortunes have always waxed and waned. Bought by Pearson in the late

Sixties, Penguin was suffering heavy losses when Peter Mayer, a brash American, took over as chief executive in 1979.

Mr Mayer wasted no time in scrapping Penguin's famous orange book covers - the green ones for thrillers also went. Traditionalists were also shocked when he bought hardback imprints such as Viking, Michael Joseph and Hamish Hamilton, bringing with them books such as Shirley Conran's *Lace* and Jane Fonda's *Work-Out*.

Mr Mayer was also a ruthless cost-cutter. In 1995 alone, 100 staff in the London headquarters were sacked, the managing director was replaced, some authors threatened to leave and morale plummeted. "There was some deal of fear about Mr May-

er," said a senior industry figure yesterday. "Questions were never really asked."

Mr Mayer was proud of the cultural changes he had unleashed. "Penguin has been liberated," he boasted to *Publishing News* shortly before announcing his surprise decision to quit last year. "We can publish any kind of book we want to."

But he was no barbarian at the gate, being prepared to take risks for the sake of literary freedom. Penguin published Salman Rushdie's *The Satanic Verses* and, like the author, Mr Mayer has lived under an Islamic death sentence since 1989.

However, Penguin has struggled in the UK over the past couple of years from substantial destocking, the collapse of the

Net Book Agreement and big retailers discounting best sellers.

But in the US Penguin continued to do better than its rivals, ostensibly thanks to a strong list of authors and imprints acquired in the late 1980s.

Yesterday's unearthing of a £100m black hole in the accounts, blamed by Pearson on one middle-ranking employee, raises questions marks about how much of that performance was due to cooking the books.

Mr Mayer's successor, Michael Lynton, a 36-year-old Harvard Business School graduate who ran the Disney studio Hollywood Pictures, recently described his new job as "a dream come true". Six weeks after taking over, it has turned into a nightmare.

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## Tesco cuts NatWest tie to link with Royal Bank

Peter Rodgers  
Financial Editor

A five-year financial services partnership between Tesco and NatWest agreed last summer broke up yesterday when the supermarket giant announced plans to team up instead with the Royal Bank of Scotland.

NatWest said it had refused to help Tesco expand further into retail banking and insurance, a decision which is the clearest indication so far of the extent of the threat from the supermarket chains to the big English high street banks.

Tesco's large store network could soon be competing head-on with NatWest's branches, but Royal Bank has a far smaller overlap with Tesco.

It has only a 3-4 per cent banking market share in England and Wales.

Shortly afterwards, Lord MacLaurin, chairman of Tesco, resigned as a non-executive director on the NatWest board because of the potential conflict of interest, and David Reid, the

deputy chairman of Tesco, quit his non-executive directorship of the insurance group Legal & General. Tesco will sell life insurance through its new joint venture with Royal Bank, which owns the telephone insurance company Direct Line and also has a strategic partnership with Scottish Widows, a competitor of L&G.

Derek Wantless, NatWest chief executive, said Tesco's

NatWest is to bring all its investment management and long-term savings businesses under one umbrella, with the formation of a new grouping to be called NatWest Wealth Management. The business will have funds of £60bn under management and will be run by Paul Myers, chairman of Gartmore, the fund management firm taken over by NatWest. The business will include Gartmore, NatWest Life & Investment Services, as well as NatWest's UK life insurance, pensions and investment arms and NatWest Ventures, which provides private equity capital.

plans conflicted with NatWest's own retail banking strategy. It emerged that NatWest may make a claim against Tesco for the cost of pulling out of the five-year contract to manage the pioneering Tesco Clubcard, which pays interest on credit balances and has a low charge to borrowers. The Clubcard sparked the war among supermarket chains to enter financial services.

NatWest said the intention had been to work with Tesco over the five years of the contract to develop new card-based products, but "what came to us with was akin to full retail banking and that did not fit with us".

NatWest added: "We will have to sit down with Tesco to thrash it out. There is a contract and they have given indications today that it will be broken."

Tesco said it offered NatWest the opportunity to continue as its banking partner but the offer was declined. NatWest refused to rule out a claim against Tesco for the cost of winding down the Clubcard service,

which employs a separate processing unit and a number of managers at the banking group to service the 9 million Clubcard customers. The problem for



Clubby: Terry Leary (left) of Tesco and Dr George Mathewson of RBS. Photograph: Jason Bye

NatWest was that Tesco decided to go well beyond plastic card products by developing a wide range of services including a pilot project for an in-store bank

later this year. The first big launch will be a Tesco credit card. The joint venture may apply for a banking licence.

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## Ofgas opposes windfall tax on British Gas

Chris Godsmark  
Business Correspondent

Clare Spottiswoode, the gas industry regulator, yesterday signalled her clear opposition to attempts by Labour to impose its planned windfall utility tax on British Gas.

Responding to plans by Gordon Brown, the shadow chancellor, to levy a broad tax on "the excess profits of privatised utilities", Ms Spottiswoode doubted whether the principle behind the levy could be applied to British Gas. She explained: "If I was going to do my job properly then there wouldn't be any excess profits. If there aren't any excess profits then it would be difficult to justify a windfall tax."

She argued the price controls planned for the group's pipeline business, Transco, which would cut about £30 off average bills from April, were designed to eliminate any excess earnings. British Gas has taken its battle against the price regime to the Monopolies and Mergers Commission.

Ms Spottiswoode pointed out that current shareholders in the company were not necessarily the same ones who had made excess profits on the rise in the share price since privatisation. Last year small investors, or "siders", saw British Gas's share price rise by a third, wiping out a large chunk of the excess gains, as the City took fright at the Transco price proposals.

Her comments yesterday were the most outspoken yet by a regulator against the windfall tax and bring Ms Spottiswoode

into an unlikely alliance with British Gas on the issue. However they could damage her relations with Labour in the run-up to the election.

In a separate move she confirmed her intention to publish several British Gas documents to try to provoke the company into a court battle over the disclosure of internal information. She dismissed British Gas's argument that much of the data it submits to Ofgas, her department, could affect its share price if it was made public.

"It is time that we really tested the law... A lot of the complaints British Gas has about confidentiality are bogus," Ms Spottiswoode said.

Ofgas also disclosed that independent gas supply companies operating in trials of domestic competition in the south of England had agreed to a new voluntary code of conduct after allegations of dubious sales tactics.

Ms Spottiswoode said all British Gas's rivals would be joining the Direct Selling Association, a body recognised by the Office of Fair Trading.

The Gas Consumers Council had wanted Ofgas to make the code legally enforceable using its licence conditions. Ms Spottiswoode said she would "seriously consider" such a move, but only if the selling problems were not sorted out.

Ofgas yesterday released its annual report showing complaints against British Gas had tripled last year to 9,267. Ms Spottiswoode said complaints had levelled off but were "far from over".

STOCK MARKETS									
FTSE 100		Dow Jones		Nikkei		Hang Seng		ASX	
4327.10	+22.80	9070.00	+12.00	14300.00	+100.00	11000.00	+100.00	3000.00	+10.00
4327.10	+22.80	9070.00	+12.00	14300.00	+100.00	11000.00	+100.00	3000.00	+10.00
4327.10	+22.80	9070.00	+12.00	14300.00	+100.00	11000.00	+100.00	3000.00	+10.00
4327.10	+22.80	9070.00	+12.00	14300.00	+100.00	11000.00	+100.00	3000.00	+10.00
4327.10	+22.80	9070.00	+12.00	14300.00	+100.00	11000.00	+100.00	3000.00	+10.00
4327.10	+22.80	9070.00	+12.00	14300.00	+100.00	11000.00	+100.00	3000.00	+10.00
4327.10	+22.80	9070.00	+12.00	14300.00	+100.00	11000.00	+100.00	3000.00	+10.00
4327.10	+22.80	9070.00	+12.00	14300.00	+100.00	11000.00	+100.00	3000.00	+10.00
4327.10	+22.80	9070.00	+12.00	14300.00	+100.00	11000.00	+100.00	3000.00	+10.00

INTEREST RATES									
Short sterling		UK medium gilt		US long bond		Money Market Rates		Bank Yields	
6.00	6.00	6.00	6.00	6.00	6.00	6.00	6.00	6.00	6.00
6.00	6.00	6.00	6.00	6.00	6.00	6.00	6.00	6.00	6.00
6.00	6.00	6.00	6.00	6.00	6.00	6.00	6.00	6.00	6.00
6.00	6.00	6.00	6.00	6.00	6.00	6.00	6.00	6.00	6.00
6.00	6.00	6.00	6.00	6.00	6.00	6.00	6.00	6.00	6.00
6.00	6.00	6.00	6.00	6.00	6.00	6.00	6.00	6.00	6.00
6.00	6.00	6.00	6.00	6.00	6.00	6.00	6.00	6.00	6.00
6.00	6.00	6.00	6.00	6.00	6.00	6.00	6.00	6.00	6.00
6.00	6.00	6.00	6.00	6.00	6.00	6.00	6.00	6.00	6.00

CURRENCIES									
Pound		Dollar		Euro		Yen		Others	
1.6221	-0.020	1.5385	-0.010	1.6221	-0.020	1.5385	-0.010	1.6221	-0.020
1.6221	-0.020	1.5385	-0.010	1.6221	-0.020	1.5385	-0.010	1.6221	-0.020
1.6221	-0.020	1.5385	-0.010	1.6221	-0.020	1.5385	-0.010	1.6221	-0.020
1.6221	-0.020	1.5385	-0.010	1.6221	-0.020	1.5385	-0.010	1.6221	-0.020
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1.6221	-0.020	1.5385	-0.010	1.6221	-0.020	1.5385	-0.010	1.6221	-0.020
1.6221	-0.020	1.5385	-0.010	1.6221	-0.020	1.5385	-0.010	1.6221	-0.020
1.6221	-0.020	1.5385	-0.010	1.6221	-0.020	1.5385	-0.010	1.6221	-0.020
1.6221	-0.020	1.5385	-0.010	1.6221	-0.020	1.5385	-0.010	1.6221	-0.020

maintained for the group's pipeline business, TransCo, which would cut about £30 off average bills from April, were designed to eliminate any excess earnings. British Gas has taken its battle against the price regime to the Monopolies and Mergers Commission.

Ms Spottiswoode pointed out that current shareholders in the company were not necessarily the same ones who had made excess profits on the rise in the share price since privatisation. Last year small investors, now "strides", saw British Gas's share price dive by a third, wiping out a large chunk of the excess gains, as the City took fright at the TransCo price problems.

Her comments yesterday were the most outspoken yet by a credible source on the company's operations in trials of domestic competition in the south of England had agreed to a new voluntary code of conduct after allegations of dubious sales tactics.

Ms Spottiswoode said all British Gas's rivals would be joining the Direct Selling Association, a body recognised by the Office of Fair Trading.

The Gas Consumers Council had wanted Ofgas to make the code legally enforceable using its license conditions. Ms Spottiswoode said she would "seriously consider" such a move, but only if the selling problems were not sorted out.

Ogas yesterday released its annual report showing complaints against British Gas had tripled last year to 9,267. Ms Spottiswoode said complaints



## Penguin opens a new chapter in rogue traders



COMMENT

To fall victim even to a fraud as apparently motiveless as this one is to demonstrate serious failings in organisational structure and control. In Pearson's case, it seems to confirm all the market's worst suspicions of sloppy and unprofessional management.

It is not just investment banks that fall prey to these days to the antics of out-of-control rogue traders, or so it would seem. Quite a number of industrial and service companies have been laid low by the rotten apple employees, too. But why did it seem so inevitable that the first media company to be made a laughing stock of in this way would be poor old accident-prone Pearson?

The first line of defence when confronted with the sickening discovery of a wrong 'un within your midst is to claim that it could have happened to anyone. Both Barings and Morgan Grenfell used this excuse and it was again being liberally applied yesterday by Pearson. If this seems familiar, well, there's always this convenient rule fall-back line - that the wrongdoer was clever, manipulative, devious and covered his tracks well.

Furthermore, Pearson claims, in the world of book publishing it is easy to hide antics of this sort. But if what Pearson is trying to say here is that Penguin is a shambling and poorly organised environment in which this kind of thing tends to go by unnoticed, it doesn't seem to help its cause much either. As well, if all else fails there are always the auditors to blame. Quite a few rods were being used in that direction yesterday too, though this is always a poor excuse when the main duty of care when booking sales lies with directors.

As in all these cases, there can in the end be no mitigation here. To fall victim even to a fraud as apparently motiveless as this one

is to demonstrate serious failings in organisational structure and control. In Pearson's case, it seems to confirm all the stock market's worst suspicions of sloppy and unprofessional management. Coming so soon after the Mindscape fiasco, it surely would have drawn blood had the old regime still been in place.

As it is, Pearson has already cleaned out the stables. There's a new team at the top, none of whom can really be blamed for this, and new auditors too. If Marjorie Scardino acts as tough as she talks, then a wind of change will shortly be sweeping through this sleepy old organisation; the neglect and sentimentalism that allowed this and other disasters to happen will soon be a thing of the past. But is she going to get the chance? There surely couldn't be a better time than this for that long-rumoured break-up bid. Some investors are going to be saying enough is enough, management changes notwithstanding.

### Chubb fattened up for the kill

Even for someone as well versed in shareholder value as Sir Ernest Harrison, today's expected £1.3bn bid for Chubb is something of a coup. Not satisfied with spinning off first Vodafone and then Chubb from Rascal, his sprawling electronics empire, he has now given shareholders another slice of

value just as the locks and safes business was running out of steam.

When Chubb emerged from Rascal it was flabby and undermanaged, grist to the mill for Ernie's hatchet-wielding lieutenant David Peacock, who set about the cost-base with gusto. No surprise that the shares should double during 1993 as he unlocked the company's well-hidden potential.

Since then, however, it has been downhill all the way as a talent for swinging the axe had to be replaced by a flair for top-line growth. The electronic and physical security market is huge, worth on some estimates £25bn a year, but in many developed markets it is also stagnant. In a handful of Far Eastern markets it is growing fast from scratch, but Chubb has struggled to capture these sales.

Chubb has had to work hard to shed its staid image and juggling by its flagging rating it has by and large failed. Profits from locks and safes have sagged as weak European economies and the moribund Australian construction market took their toll. Even the sexier closed circuit TVs and alarms sector have struggled to generate double-digit growth. After disappointing interim figures before Christmas analysts have been taking the red pen to forecasts.

So securing a bid at a premium of almost 50 per cent to the shares' recent low represents a real coup, even if delayed growth from recent Australian acquisitions means the price is less attractive than it might

immediately appear. Adding in the £750m that the rumour Rascal business is now worth, a total of more than £2bn compares pretty favourably with the £700m Williams almost got away with paying five years ago.

Managements are usually pilloried for overpaying for assets, but this case shows the dangers of being too parsimonious. If Chubb's latest suitors really are Williams once again, it is paying a heavy price for its light fists in 1991, when it was widely thought that a final tweak to its offer would have won the day.

### How Tesco played the wrong card

It is all very well for a bank to help a supermarket develop plastic payment and credit cards, a bread and butter processing service that can be done under anyone's brand name. But it seems to be quite a different story if a supermarket strays into banking heartland, by setting up branches in its stores and eventually applying for a banking licence. This is what tipped NatWest into withdrawing its co-operation from Tesco, whose phenomenally successful Clubcard service the bank had helped build up.

Prompted by Sainsbury's decision to set up a bank jointly owned with Bank of Scotland, Tesco is now thinking of doing exactly the same itself, in a game of financial services leapfrog with its closest rival. Tesco will

not be applying for a banking licence, yet, there is little doubt about where its plans are leading.

Even if NatWest had been more co-operative, it is hard to fault the decision by Tesco to switch to Royal Bank, which like Bank of Scotland has such a small share of the English and Welsh markets that the conflict of interest is insubstantial. As part of a streamlining of retail banking services, NatWest yesterday announced it would be sticking its fund management, private banking and life insurance operations into a single unit. In part, these moves are a response to tougher competition of exactly the sort that Sainsbury and Tesco are bringing to the banking market.

So it would have been a nonsense to continue the relationship. Indeed, eyebrows were raised when it was first announced, though at the time few realised what a threat the supermarkets might become to the banks. What neither side has yet admitted, however, is the likelihood that this will be a zero sum game. Banking is not a marketplace that will expand easily as new entrants arrive. The main impact of the supermarkets, therefore, will probably be to reduce the profitability of the banking market. There could be a quite vicious price war and smaller players will find it hard to survive. No wonder Lord Macaulay was made to feel so uncomfortable in his position on the NatWest board. He's about to take a knife to the bank's soft under belly.

## Jump in inflation puts Clarke on the spot

Diane Coyle  
Economics Editor

Kenneth Clarke, Chancellor of the Exchequer, suffered a fresh embarrassment yesterday when official figures showed an unexpected jump in the headline rate of inflation.

The ovens followed hard on the heels of the Bank of England's prediction, earlier this week, that inflation was set to miss the Government's target.

The Chancellor rushed to deflect attention from the disappointing figures to a report on the British economy from a friendlier source, the European Commission. "The Commission highlights the Government's economic policies as the reasons for the stable and sustainable recovery of the UK economy," Mr Clarke said.

A Treasury statement picked out a paragraph in the EU report which said the Government could achieve the target of underlying inflation below 2.5 per cent by the end of the current parliament.

However, the Chancellor forgot to mention the report's next paragraph, which warns of the danger of the economy overheating. "This may require a tightening of monetary policy," it continued.

City experts were certainly disappointed with the inflation figures, even though they showed the biggest one-month

drop in the price of clothing and shoes since 1947, when Christian Dior introduced his revolutionary New Look.

Most economists still expect the target inflation measure to fall below the key 2.5 per cent level during the next three months, but to start increasing subsequently.

Jonathan Loytes, UK economist at HSBC Markets, said: "This was a setback for Mr Clarke." But he said better ovens in the pipeline over the next few months would allow the Chancellor to avoid having to raise borrowing costs ahead of the general election.

Indeed, the Chancellor had been informed about the inflation figures on Tuesday afternoon, well before he announced on the day of the Bank's Inflation Report that he saw no need for higher interest rates.

Retail price inflation rose to 2.8 per cent in January from 2.5 per cent in December, with most of the increase due to a rise in mortgage rates during the month compared with a decline the previous January. The target measure, which excludes mortgage interest payments, was unchanged at 3.1 per cent, rather than declining as expected.

There was a record-breaking fall in the price of shoes and clothing, down 5.8 per cent in January. It was the biggest drop since figures began in



Return to the past: Tamara Beckwith (left) modelling a "Diorama" cocktail dress for the 50th anniversary of Dior's New Look. January saw the biggest drop in prices of clothes and shoes since 1947, when the New Look was launched. But the price of today's fashions (compilified by Helena Christiana) has increased sevenfold in the past 50 years

1947. Although the price of clothes has risen nearly sevenfold during the past half century, their level is the same now as a year ago.

The price of household goods also fell sharply. The 3.6 per cent decline was the

biggest since 1956. But offsetting these drops in prices on the high street, there were increases in non-seasonal food prices, car insurance, second-hand cars and a variety of services.

"Service sector inflation has at last responded to the stronger demand of the last year or two," said Simon Briscoe at Nikko.

Adam Cole at brokers James Capel said the figures strongly supported the Governor of the Bank of England

in his call for higher borrowing costs. The Chancellor, however, insisted that his views and the Governor's were very close. "The Governor of the Bank and myself are entirely agreed that there is only a small dif-

## British firms not scared of Europe

The Social Chapter has not scared British businesses from investing on the Continent. New research shows that UK investment in the European Union (EU) has overtaken investment in the US for the first time, writes Diane Coyle.

There is also no evidence that the cost advantage of production in the UK rather than on the Continent is slowing down foreign investment by British manufacturers.

In the five years to 1994, new investment by UK companies in the EU was £32.6bn, up from £20.6bn to the previous five years and from the tiny amounts in the early 1980s, according to a report published today by the National Institute of Economic and Social Research.

Investment in the US was far higher, at £46bn, in 1986-90, but fell behind, to only £26.7bn, in the latest five years. There is some evidence that companies diverted their investment plans from the US to the Continent.

The value of total British investment in Europe has similarly pulled ahead, rising to £71bn in 1995, compared with investments worth £66.7bn in North America. The figures highlight how much UK companies have at stake if staying out of the single currency marginalises Britain in future.

The reason for this drift towards Europe is the single market programme, according to author Nigel Pain. The single market has raised the value of UK business assets in the EU by a third. The impact has been most pronounced in financial services, which would help explain why the City of London tends to favour Britain joining the single European currency.

## Flexible workforces needed in Europe

Amid upbeat assessments for growth, the OECD and Brussels have focused on deregulation. Katherine Butler and Yvette Cooper report

The European Commission and the Paris-based Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) both joined the call for further deregulation in European labour markets yesterday, as they released upbeat assessments of the prospects for growth in Europe in the next few years.

In its annual economic report the European Commission went further than before yesterday in calling on European Union (EU) governments to embrace worker flexibility as the key to casting off the millstone of persistently high unemployment.

Meanwhile, the OECD's annual survey of the French economy said that although growth was likely to rise above 2.5 per cent in the next few years, unemployment would remain high without further structural reform. It also predicted that on current policies France would not meet the Maastricht criteria for joining a single currency.

The European Commission stops short of advocating the American economic model which for "social and political reasons" could not, it says, be emulated in Europe. The US approach to job creation had caused a "significant" drop in real wage income for the low skilled, the report said. Nevertheless, the Commission calls for "pragmatic solutions" including below minimum wages for the low skilled, for young people or the long-term unemployed, more flexibility in working time

and greater use of voluntary part-time work. Employers' contributions at the lower end of the scale should be lowered with any revenue loss offset by taxes on pollution or other environmental levies. A Commission spokesman stressed, however, that the choice of measures remained strictly for national governments to decide.

Sticking to the upbeat growth and budgetary forecasts it issued last November, the Commission anticipates steady growth in 1997 despite growing concern over the ability of Germany - where unemployment has reached post-war records - to meet the EMU deficit criterion. But the report concedes questions over budgetary consolidation in many member states could tarnish the rosy picture.

The Commission also warned that one-off accounting tricks employed by some governments to help their economies meet the entry criteria for EMU would not be enough to create the long-term budgetary stability which membership demands.

"The main risk to the broadly favourable outlook would seem to reside in the possible emergence of doubts on the determination of governments to accomplish the process of budgetary consolidation," it said. Eurostat, the EU's statistical watchdog, will give its verdict next week on the acceptability of a range of measures taken to help member states such as Italy become founding members of the euro in 1999. Rome could be warned that its "Euro-tax" is an inappropriate weapon

towards a sustainable low budget deficit.

The report praises Britain's economic performance; the Commission says the UK is experiencing "a recovery of longer duration than in the rest of the EU". Debt has risen as a percentage of GDP but consolidation of the public finances has helped slow the increase and it is expected to peak at 57 per cent in 1997. This just below the 60 per cent maximum stipulated under the EMU qualifying rules. Britain's public deficit has already been forecast by the Commission to be 3.5 per cent of GDP in 1997 but the report admits this did not take account of the latest cuts in government expenditure and new measures to combat tax evasion and fraud. The government expects

to bring the deficit down to 3 per cent of GDP this year but the report steers clear of predicting whether this will be achieved.

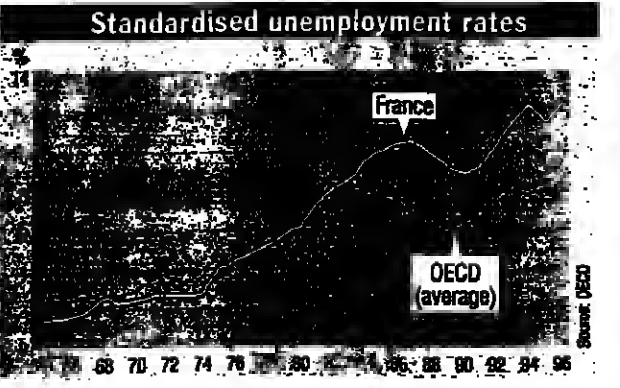
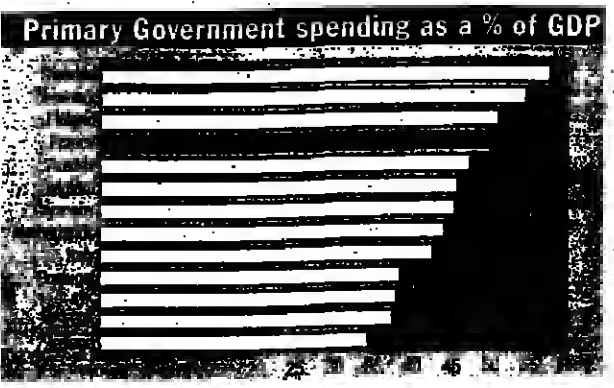
The OECD forecasts that France will just miss the Maastricht deficit criteria. Its annual report on the French economy predicts government borrowing in 1997 of 3.2 per cent. However, the OECD says the Maastricht criteria are "within reach". Government borrowing is forecast to fall to 3 per cent of GDP by 1998. The French government has frozen nominal spending in the state budget for 1997, which will mean serious cuts in real terms. That, combined with social security reforms and the sizeable payment into the government coffers from France Telecom, is bringing the deficit steadily down.

The report said, "Even if, as foreseen by the OECD's projection, there is some deficit slippage, there should be room to take the measures needed to bring it back on track. In the absence of additional measures, further progress in fiscal consolidation will be slow."

After two years of economic slowdown, the French economy is now expected to pick up. The OECD said: "The sharp fall in interest rates since late 1995 and an improving international environment should set the stage for stronger growth in coming years." Tight monetary policy - as the French government kept interest rates high so that the franc shadowed the mark - at the same time as fiscal consolidation and a slowdown elsewhere in the French economy. However, the report predicts that the French economy should now grow by 2.5 per cent this year and 2.6 per cent next year.

The OECD points out that France has made progress in reforming its labour market, it believes that more could still be done. Unemployment stands at a record 12.7 per cent. The OECD forecast that unemployment will remain around 12.5 per cent this year, and will fall to 12.1 per cent in 1998.

The report also points out that much of the problem is due to rising unemployment among the unskilled - a problem faced by all European economies including Britain.



## BUILDING SOCIETIES ACT 1986

Notice under paragraph 7 of Schedule 17 to the Act

Notice is hereby given that Woolwich Building Society, Register No 683B whose principal office is at Corporate Headquarters, Watling Street, Bexleyheath, Kent, DA6 7RR desires to transfer its business to Woolwich plc, and that the society has applied to the Building Societies Commission to confirm the transfer.

Any interested party may make written representations to the Commission and/or give notice of intention to make oral representations to the Commission with respect to the application. Written representations and notices of intention to make oral representations should be received by the Commission at Victory House, 30-34 Kingsway, London WC2B 6ES by 17th March 1997. Oral representations will be heard by the Commission on 16th April 1997 at a time and place to be determined by the Commission.

## WOOLWICH BUILDING SOCIETY

Principal Office: Corporate Headquarters, Watling Street, Bexleyheath, Kent DA6 7RR



## business

## Shell set to explore brave new world

## THE INVESTMENT COLUMN

EDITED BY TOM STEVENSON

Shell tracked the market faithfully during the recession but it shrugged off the wider gloom in 1994 and has been widening the gap ever since. Better-than-expected full-year figures yesterday lifted the shares another 27.5p to 1.089p, fully justifying outgoing chairman John Jennings's decision to give shareholders a two-for-one scrip to lower the price.

Often criticised in the past for being slow to react to a fast-changing world, Shell has actually rewarded patient shareholders well over the years. Investors who bought 10 years ago, just before the crash, and held on, have seen their capital grow threefold. Reinvesting the steadily growing dividends over that period would have led to a six-fold appreciation.

Yesterday's 30 per cent rise in net income to £5.7bn, a record, underlined the benefits of diversified groups such as BP and Shell. In a year when the oil price rose steadily to well above its average trading range over the past 15 years, buoyant returns from exploration and production (up 74 per cent to £3.2bn) were more than enough to offset a slump in chemicals profits (down 30 per cent to £762m) and an indifferent refining and marketing performance (2 per cent better at £1.75bn before exceptional).

The upstream arm benefited from the price of Brent crude rising to its highest levels since the Gulf war spike in 1990/91. Shell has an unmatched spread of exploration prospects worldwide and is cutting the cost of extracting oil along with the best in the industry.

It is elsewhere in the business, however, that Shell's future performance will be decided. Refining margins have been under pressure around the world for so long that inadequate returns are becoming the norm. In chemicals, that is the case in Spain, and the challenge is relentlessly to cut costs and to churn the portfolio away from the basket case products where oversupply and weak demand mean there is no hope of ever getting a sensible margin.

Marketing, the lion's share of the downstream operation, is the real problem area, with deregulation in previously protected markets such as Japan causing havoc as old retail boundaries break down. In the brave new world of supermarkets selling petrol and oil companies peddling forecourt groceries, it will require nimble feet than Shell has shown in the past to come out on top.

Shell's \$12.3bn cash pile puts the company in an enviable position ahead of what the company forecasts to be a sustained rise in oil and gas production of perhaps 7 per cent a year for the next five years. To benefit fully from that it must beef up its spending on exploration and production capex, continue to explore partnerships such as the Texaco and Amoco alliances in North America and reduce the company's ex-

posure to the other damaging downstream cycles.

Shell will never set the investment pulse racing, but as a steady, core holding in an extremely well-run, reliable company, it is unbeatable.

## Willis Corroon currency woes

Insurance brokers such as Willis Corroon have had little going for them over the past five years as rates have been driven relentlessly lower. The shares have been in steady retreat since peaking at 492p in 1986. Over the past five years alone they have lost 45 per cent of their value, dropping another 6.5p to 133p yesterday as currency woes were piled on top of the continuing gloom about insurance rates.

At first sight, the market's reaction looked cheerful, given that pre-tax profits, up from £50.2m to £91.6m in the 12 months to December, came in ahead of expectations. The comparison was flattened by last year's net exceptional hit of £30m, mainly for extra provisions to cover the group's withdrawal from certain UK underwriting operations. Equally, the rise in operating profits from continuing businesses from £79.4m to £87.8m was helped by what is likely to prove a one-off boost

from Willis's Lloyd's members' agency. The £14.5m profit commission for the 1993 year of account, a bumper one for names, is the first for several years and Willis is warning that current estimates are that 1994 commissions will be around half the previous year's level.

Looking past these swings and roundabouts, the group is doing its best to manage its way through the storms which continue to swirl around the broking industry. The figures included a further £11.3m severance burden as employee numbers, 11,500 two years ago, fell another 11 per cent to 9,116.

They are probably the minimum required in a business operating in a market which saw premium rates fall another 10 per cent or so last year. In view of that, Willis did well to raise brokerage and fee revenues in the continuing business by 3 per cent to £683m.

The picture is even better in most individual business sectors. Willis enjoyed a 4 per cent rise in reinsurance brokerage last year, a 2 per cent increase in specialty businesses like marine and aerospace and growth of 6 per cent in so-called "retail" lines sold to companies in the UK and 3 per cent in North American retail.

With no debt, the group is well positioned to attack the maturity of its markets by buying some of its smaller competitors, but it still has a big hill to climb.

Even with 70 per cent of this year's revenues sold forward, the currency impact of the pound at current rates could be £6m to £7m. Meanwhile, rates continue to fall. NatWest has raised its profits forecast to £94m for this year, putting the shares on a modest forward p/e of 10. Yielding 6.2 per cent, they are well supported, but investors hoping for a bid may be disappointed. Unattractive.

## Bensons bags a return to profit

Sadly, Bensons Crisps' record as an innovator in the snack market has not been matched by its financial performance. The tiny Lancashire-based company has won fame beyond its size for such classics as hedgehog-flavoured and jacket crisps, many of which have been copied by its deeper-pocketed brethren. Such novelties did not prevent the group coming to the brink of collapse in 1994 after losing heavily in a supermarket price war. But after a £4.6m rescue cash call at 16p a share two years ago, new management has wrestled the group on to an even keel.

Yesterday's return to the black after two years of losses only served to underline the transformation. Pre-tax profits leapt to a record £2.03m in the year to November, up from losses of £747,000, producing earnings per share of 4p. The final dividend of 0.75p makes a 1p total for the year, the first since 1993 that shareholders have been blessed with any payment.

The good news prompted a 5p rise in the shares to 40.5p yesterday, their best level for over two years.

The figures reflect a rationalisation of the group's production facilities, which are now concentrated on a new £6.5m plant in Kirkham, near Preston. The resulting increased production efficiencies helped the £1.61m increase in turnover to £32.8m, flow through to operating profits which soared from £928,000 to £2.54m. The comparison was helped by a £933,000 provision for a loss on a business sold, while interest charges fell. There should be more of that after gearing tumbled from 64 to 16 per cent during the year. The key question for Bensons, with just 6.5 per cent of the crisps market, is whether it can avoid the pitfalls of the past. Its Dandy and Beano crisps, joined last year by Spiderman extruded snacks, have continued to do well and it is cranking up a new line at Kirkham to take control of all its tortilla corn chip production. That should add another string to its own-label portfolio, which already covers 59 per cent of its crisp sales.

House brokers Peel Hunt reckon profits will rise to £2.4m this year, putting the shares on a forward multiple of 10. Reasonable value.

## C&amp;G to cut back mortgage deals as lending increases

Magnus Grimond

Cheltenham & Gloucester, the former building society now part of Lloyds TSB, called time on some of the more attractive deals available to borrowers yesterday as it reported a near-doubling in its gross lending last year.

Andrew Longhurst, the former chief executive who is to become chairman, said the flat housing market meant competition for remortgage business had been particularly vigorous over the past two years, resulting in some offers to customers which were "clearly unsustainable" in the longer term.

"We are already seeing a return to a more healthy situation and while competition will continue to be keen, margins in 1997 are tending to widen." Big discounts and "cash-back" schemes are likely to be phased out by competitors, he suggested.

C&G, which prides itself on providing low-cost, no-strings mortgages, has abandoned its own promise to undercut the big five housing lenders on rates since the beginning of February.

Mr Longhurst said the new commitment only to be "competitive" would have no significant effect on borrowers, although he conceded there was little sign of any real improvement in the housing market: "You need to draw a very clear distinction between house prices going up and actual sales in the market."

The market recorded the second-lowest level of transactions for 20 years towards the end of 1996. "You are not looking at a very buoyant market in terms of transactions, as not many people are putting houses on the market," he said.

But despite the caution about



Andrew Longhurst: Some offers were unsustainable

the market, C&G is continuing to prosper. Reporting its first full-year figures since its £1.8bn acquisition by Lloyds in August 1995, the group revealed a 92 per cent increase in gross advances to £6.74bn, boosted by the addition of Lloyds' existing mortgage book. Pre-tax profits leapt 36 per cent to £356m in 1996, helped by bad debt provisions slashed from £43.7m to £11.2m as arrears fell and rising house prices cut the level of negative equity. Arrears are said still to be running at below half the industry average of around 1.6 per cent of borrowers.

C&G is now claiming a 15.1 per cent share of the market for new mortgage lending after net advances soared from £1.62bn to £2.82bn last year. The group said it was taking twice the amount of new business that its "natural" market share would suggest at the end of the year, its share of total outstanding mortgages in the UK had risen from 6.5 to 6.9 per cent.

Mr Longhurst said they had delivered on the strategy laid out in the transfer document which members were asked to vote on when Lloyds acquired the business.

"In the first year we have been able to double mortgage lending, double our natural market share and we have driven down the cost-asset ratio."

But it has not been entirely painless: the group's cost-income ratio crept up 1 percentage point to 33 per cent in 1996. Mr Longhurst blamed this on last year's interest rate promise, cash "gifts" paid to new borrowers and the decision not to charge them any initial set-up or other fees.

He said Lloyds TSB, which reports its 1996 profits today, remained "alert" to strategic acquisitions, but there was nothing on the stocks at the moment. The group will see around 1,000 branches added this year, taking the total to some 3,000, after it starts selling through TSB, Black Horse Agencies and Lloyds Property Services outlets.

## £35m from Britannia in mutual benefits

Britannia Building Society yesterday underscored its determination to remain a mutual society by announcing a £35m distribution to its members under the Members' Loyalty Bonus Scheme, which was launched a year ago.

John Heaps, chief executive, said: "Even allowing for the costs to cover the Loyalty Bonus Scheme, special discount and associated costs, we have still managed to maintain our solvency ratio and the investment programme necessary to improve our service to members."

"This is proof, if any were needed, that the Members' Loyalty Bonus Scheme is sustainable and that Britannia has a sound future as a thriving, modern mutual."

Members earn points depending on the length and depth of their membership. This year, the declared value of each point is 22p. Around 780,000 people qualify for payments of up to £50; 217,000 qualify for up to £100; and 43,000 qualify for more. The highest payment is £500, and the average is £35.

The payouts accompanied Britannia's results for 1996, showing that a drop in interest receivable from £815m to £753m was almost cancelled out by a reduction in interest payable from £622m to £563m.

## IN BRIEF

• Retail sales in the US rebounded last month after a December performance that was much weaker than originally estimated. Sales rose by 0.6 per cent in January, or 0.4 per cent excluding cars. But the increase for December was revised down by half to a modest 0.3 per cent. These figures hinted at a slightly weaker pace of economic growth, but the weekly figures for new jobless claims pointed in the opposite direction. They fell to 309,000 last week, the lowest number since July when job creation was powering ahead, from 324,000 the week before. The financial markets took the mix favourably, on balance. More significant figures, for industrial production and capacity use, are due today.

• The Government's Paymaster agency is being sold to EDS/Hogg Robinson for £22.7m. The agency provides pensions and banking-type services to the public sector. It has annual turnover in excess of £25m, administers 1.6 million public sector pensions, operates accounts with the Bank of England of 1,400 government departments, agencies and other public-sector organisations, and has comprehensive in-house information technology systems.

• West European car registrations fell 2.9 per cent in January to 1,130,000, according to the Association des Constructeurs Européens d'Automobiles. Registrations in the 15 EU countries fell 2.5 per cent to 1,099,200, while those in Norway and Switzerland were down 16.3 per cent to 30,800. The sharpest falls were a 33.7 per cent drop in French registrations to 122,300, a 26.3 per cent decline in Switzerland to 19,600, and a 9.7 per cent decrease to 23,400 in Austria. There were sharp rises in Sweden of 28.4 per cent to 14,400, in Spain of 22.1 per cent to 68,600 and in Ireland of 20.7 per cent to 20,400.

• Telewest Communications has appointed Stephen Davidson chief executive. He has been acting chief executive since August. The company has also appointed Charles Burdick as finance director.

• BAA said its seven UK airports handled a total of 6.7 million passengers in January, an increase of 5.2 per cent on the same month last year. The company said the increase would have been 6 per cent but for the effect of fog disruption at London's Heathrow, Gatwick and Stansted airports, which reduced the number of passengers by about 30,000. All major markets saw growth in the month, with North Atlantic services growing by 12.2 per cent and other long haul routes up by 7.9 per cent.

• Lufthansa said its cargo operation and Scandinavian Airlines Systems Cargo are to co-ordinate freight, sales and marketing activities as part of a drive to cut costs. The companies, which already operate joint passenger flights, will share freight technology services and work together on new products.

• Copyright Promotions has signed a contract for the Mr Men characters with Playmates Toys of the US. Playmates Toys will develop a range of Mr Men and Little Miss toys in time for the first broadcasts of the Mr Men TV series in the US in the autumn.

• Macfarlane Group (Clansman) is buying Amalgamated Plastics, a maker of polyethylene film, for a maximum £7.5m. In the year to October, Amalgamated made profits of just under £500,000 on sales of £21.17m.

• Candover Investments, the venture capital company, said the heady level of mergers and acquisitions in the UK could continue over the next five years. It said a survey of 50 of the UK's biggest companies showed that 44 per cent planned to make an acquisition within the next year, and 76 per cent were likely to do so in the next five years.

Company Results				
	Turnover £	Pre-tax £	EPS	Dividend
Avonbridge Bros (I)	15.5m (14.0m)	1.03m (0.84m)	17.1p (15.5p)	8.3p (8.1p)
Bensons Crisps (F)	32.8m (31.2m)	2.03m (0.73m)	4p (1p)	1p (nil)
Morgan Stanley (F)	253m (172m)	5.17m (2.02m)	13.12p (8.03p)	4.2p (2.7p)
Willis Corroon (F)	- (F)	81.8m (50.2m)	13p (7p)	6.5p (6.8p)

(F) - Final (I) - Interim

## Ivory &amp; Sime rebuilds fund manager team

Magnus Grimond

Ivory & Sime, the troubled Edinburgh investment management group, yesterday moved to repair some of the damage caused by last week's ousting of managing director Colin Hook by announcing the recruitment of five senior fund managers.

The new recruits will fill some of the gaps created in the last two months by the departure of seven executives, including two board members, which has prompted speculation that the group is ripe to be taken over.

But Sir David Kinloch, who was drafted in by Caledonia Investments, Ivory's controlling shareholder, to replace Mr Hook, again firmly rebutted any suggestion that the group was for sale and suggested that morale was starting to improve. "I would like to think things are much more stable here." The group had not lost any of its funds under management since the latest upheavals came to light, he said. "I think clients are broadly happy. None have indicated they want to leave."

The new team is headed by Raymond Haines, a former

head of investments at Hill Samuel Asset Management.

Also joining are Paul Galloway, a refugee from General Accident, which is moving its fund management operation to London, Danika O'Neal, who is coming from Investment Bank Austria to take up a new role covering European smaller companies and Raymond Abbott, coming back to Ivory after seven months with the Royal Bank of Scotland. The fifth recruit, George Fyfe, is already in place as senior dealer after 30 years with Edinburgh stockbrokers Bell Lawrie White.

Sir David said they were still working on filling one or two further gaps, but added: "I think this is an indication we haven't been idle." They had been working on recruiting people over the past five weeks. "We had quite a lot of interest, but it would be wrong to say people were beating a path to our door."

He refused to be drawn on whether Ivory was looking for a replacement at board level for Gordon Neilly, the former business development director, who left at the end of last year.

## British Biotech finance boss quits

Magnus Grimond

British Biotech, the UK's leading biotechnology group, surprised the City yesterday by announcing the sudden resignation of its finance director, James Noble, leaving behind potential option profits of around £2.65m. Shares in the group initially fell 20p, before recovering to end 9.5p down at 239p.

Mr Noble was a key figure in the group's relations with both the City and the press and one shareholder suggested yesterday he had been guilty of "over-egging" the story at times. But Keith McCullagh, chief executive, said there had been no dissatisfaction with Mr Noble.

"James's management of the accounts has been exemplary."

The company was moving to a new stage of its development as it established new trading subsidiaries on the Continent, which would require the establishment of systems and procedures to match.

"James has been thinking whether he wants to help take us forward as the next stage of his career and he has come to the conclusion that he doesn't."

Mr Noble, who arrived from Kleinwort Benson, the merchant bank, in 1990, is understood to be looking at a number of other options, including joining some young growing companies.

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# market report / shares

## Footsie reaches new high in spite of election jitters

### MARKET REPORT

DEREK PAIN

stock market reporter of the year

### Data Bank

FTSE 100	4327.1	+22.8
FTSE 250	4586.7	+12.2
FTSE 350	2134.7	+10.0
SEAQ VOLUME	937.2m shares	
49,801 buyers		
Gilt Index	96.56	+0.02

### Share spotlight

300	
280	
260	
240	
220	

Equities enjoyed another record-breaking session, drawing encouragement from New York's outstanding overnight display. Footsie stretched 22.8 points to 4,327.1, topping last week's peak by 19.3.

Yet political nervousness is becoming increasingly apparent. To a large extent election jitters have been masked by Wall Street's strength. Although the stock market has attempted to cling to Wall Street's coat-tails there is no doubt it has found it difficult to remain in touch.

Indeed the gap between Footsie and the Dow Jones Average is yawning wider and wider. At the start of last year it was around 1,400 points. When this year got under way the gap had stretched to 2,434 and as the market closed yesterday it stood near 2,600.

However there remains a strong body of opinion that shares will continue to perform

well although there is a suspicion the market could endure a bout of summertime blues.

Another outbreak of takeover activity, possibly due to the looming election, is helping to soak up some of the political uncertainty. The mystery predator at Chubb Security means a £1.3bn offer is in the market and comes on the heels of the battle for Newman Foods and Fairway's successful strike for Burnfield. Siebe's modest £46m bid for Wescor is seen as another indication that corporate Britain wants to get deals done and dusted before polling day.

Chubb, firm on Wednesday on takeover speculation, jumped a further 79p to 420p; the bid is expected to come in at 450p.

Unilever is also contributing to the takeover fever. The chance of the Anglo-Dutch giant hitting the bid trail has increased this week with Reckitt

& Co., up a further 22.5p to 757.5p on SBC Warburg support, seen as the most likely target. Since Unilever's ambitious became apparent Reckitt shares have climbed 48p.

Smith & Nephew, the health care group, is another regarded as a possible target. The shares gained 9p to 188p, highest since November. Last year Smith & Nephew was the subject of heavy bid speculation with Johnson & Johnson, the US giant, seen as the most likely predator.

Aktions, thought to be in the sights of Carnival, the US group with a 29 per cent interest, rose 19p to another peak, 956.5p.

The Chubb excitement spilt over to its former parent, Racal Electronic. A suspected meeting at Henderson Crosthwaite was another bullish influence. The shares rose 13.5p to 276.5p.

Esmap, the publisher, was another thought to be meeting analysts; its shares edged forward 2.5p to 812.5p.

Short, largely on its share-split, fared 27.5p to 1,089p; the rest of the sector, with the exception of Cairn Energy, had an indifferent session. Cairn was helped by renewed exploration interest in Bangladesh where it is deeply involved. The shares rose 22p to 557.5p.

Lucape, the international trading group, gained 9.5p to 270.5p on Kleinwort Benson support and BAA, rose 4p to 545p on Lehman Brothers buy advice. Pearson was hit by the possible £100m provision, falling 14p to 749.5p.

Utilities were unsettled by Gordon Brown's assertion that Labour's planned windfall tax would be legal. Thames Water fell 7p to 667p.

Imperial Chemical Industries gave up 7p to 751.5p as Salomon Brothers reduced its recommendation to hold. It has substantially downgraded expectations and is looking for little changed profits of \$61m this year and £702m next.

An upbeat profits forecast - an unusual event in these days of profit warnings - sent clothing group French Connection 45.5p higher at 315p and ahead of figures today Flying Flowers moved up 3.5p to 215.5p.

Health shares were strong. SmithKline Beecham, figures

soon, jumped 25.5p to 883.5p and Celtech rose 12.5p to 671.5p. Shield Diagnostic, still awaiting trial results on its method of detecting heart disease, gained another 45.5p to 370.5p. But British Biotech fell 9.5p to 239p on the surprising departure of finance director James Noble. At one time the shares were off 20p.

Copyright Promotions, the merchandising group, jumped 10.5p to 91p after signing up with Playmates Toys of the US for the development of the "Mr Men" brand.

Stockbroker Charterhouse. They had a busy day, collecting two brokerages - John Mauders, a builder, and Hamsters Armley, a printer. Mauders held at 185p and Hamsters at 102.5p.

Brookers, the leisure group, fell 5p to 37p, a 12-month low, and director share-buying lifted wine bar operator Pemberton 4.5p to 25p.

Deals in the shares of Burtonwood Brewery, the Warrington group, continue to battle. There has been a steady stream of small deals in the past few weeks, taking the price to a 196.5p peak. The activity has prompted rumours of stake-building ahead of a bid or selling by members of the three families which collectively have more than 40 per cent. Biggest outside shareholder is Allied Domecq with nearly 5 per cent.

Jarvis Porter, the drink labels and packaging group, is attracting attention. The shares have edged forward, closing 8p higher at 145.5p. They were 310p a year ago. Interim profits were lower and although second-half figures will show some improvement there is talk a bidder is preparing to take advantage of JP's problems.

### Share Price Data

Prices are in sterling except where stated. The yield is last year's dividend, rounded up by 20 per cent, as a percentage of the share price. The price earnings (P/E) ratio is the share price divided by last year's earnings per share, excluding exceptional items.

Other details: 1 Ex rights 2 Ex dividend 3 Ex all 4 Ex all 5 Ex all 6 Ex all 7 Ex all 8 Ex all 9 Ex all 10 Ex all 11 Ex all 12 Ex all 13 Ex all 14 Ex all 15 Ex all 16 Ex all 17 Ex all 18 Ex all 19 Ex all 20 Ex all 21 Ex all 22 Ex all 23 Ex all 24 Ex all 25 Ex all 26 Ex all 27 Ex all 28 Ex all 29 Ex all 30 Ex all 31 Ex all 32 Ex all 33 Ex all 34 Ex all 35 Ex all 36 Ex all 37 Ex all 38 Ex all 39 Ex all 40 Ex all 41 Ex all 42 Ex all 43 Ex all 44 Ex all 45 Ex all 46 Ex all 47 Ex all 48 Ex all 49 Ex all 50 Ex all 51 Ex all 52 Ex all 53 Ex all 54 Ex all 55 Ex all 56 Ex all 57 Ex all 58 Ex all 59 Ex all 60 Ex all 61 Ex all 62 Ex all 63 Ex all 64 Ex all 65 Ex all 66 Ex all 67 Ex all 68 Ex all 69 Ex all 70 Ex all 71 Ex all 72 Ex all 73 Ex all 74 Ex all 75 Ex all 76 Ex all 77 Ex all 78 Ex all 79 Ex all 80 Ex all 81 Ex all 82 Ex all 83 Ex all 84 Ex all 85 Ex all 86 Ex all 87 Ex all 88 Ex all 89 Ex all 90 Ex all 91 Ex all 92 Ex all 93 Ex all 94 Ex all 95 Ex all 96 Ex all 97 Ex all 98 Ex all 99 Ex 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# Williams fears trial by media

Motor racing  
DEREK ALLSON

Williams and Patrick Head yesterday of their team as they await the death of Ayrton Senna, which starts at Imola on Thursday.

Williams directors, who include his chief designer, Adrian Newey, the race director, Tony Brynner and two other officials, are charged with a double-edged sword. They must keep the team's image as clean as possible, but they must also acknowledge the fact that the case is being treated as a media spectacle. The team's technical director, Peter Brabeck-Letford, said: "It's not good for the team or the individuals involved. It's a very important serious case. He is an internationally known figure. Yes, I'm worried."

Head, the team's technical director, said he was anxious to clear his name and talked of the pressure of preparing for a new Formula One season under the threat of a guilty verdict. He said: "The charge is very serious, it's a criminal case, and we have to defend ourselves to the maximum. It is something I do not want on my record. We have to persuade the judge it is not an appropriate charge."

"It is quite a high profile subject and the trial is something I'm not looking forward to. If I was offered the opportunity of not going, then I don't see a lot of point in being down there."

"It is not an ideal situation continuing to work with the trial coming up. The only way to deal with it is to put it in com-

partment and deal with what ever you're doing at the time."

Head is still waiting for permission to examine the wreck of the car. Almost three years after the fatal accident at the San Marino Grand Prix, he said: "I think there is quite a bit on the car itself that would help support our view." Head challenges the accusation that steering column failure caused the accident.

Williams confirmed his team - as well as McLaren and Tyrrell - were hopeful of joining the other teams as signatories to the new Concordat agreement and insisted he had never challenged the position of the sports impresario, Bernie Ecclestone. It is generally believed Ron Dennis, managing director of McLaren, has harboured ambitions of taking over from Ecclestone.

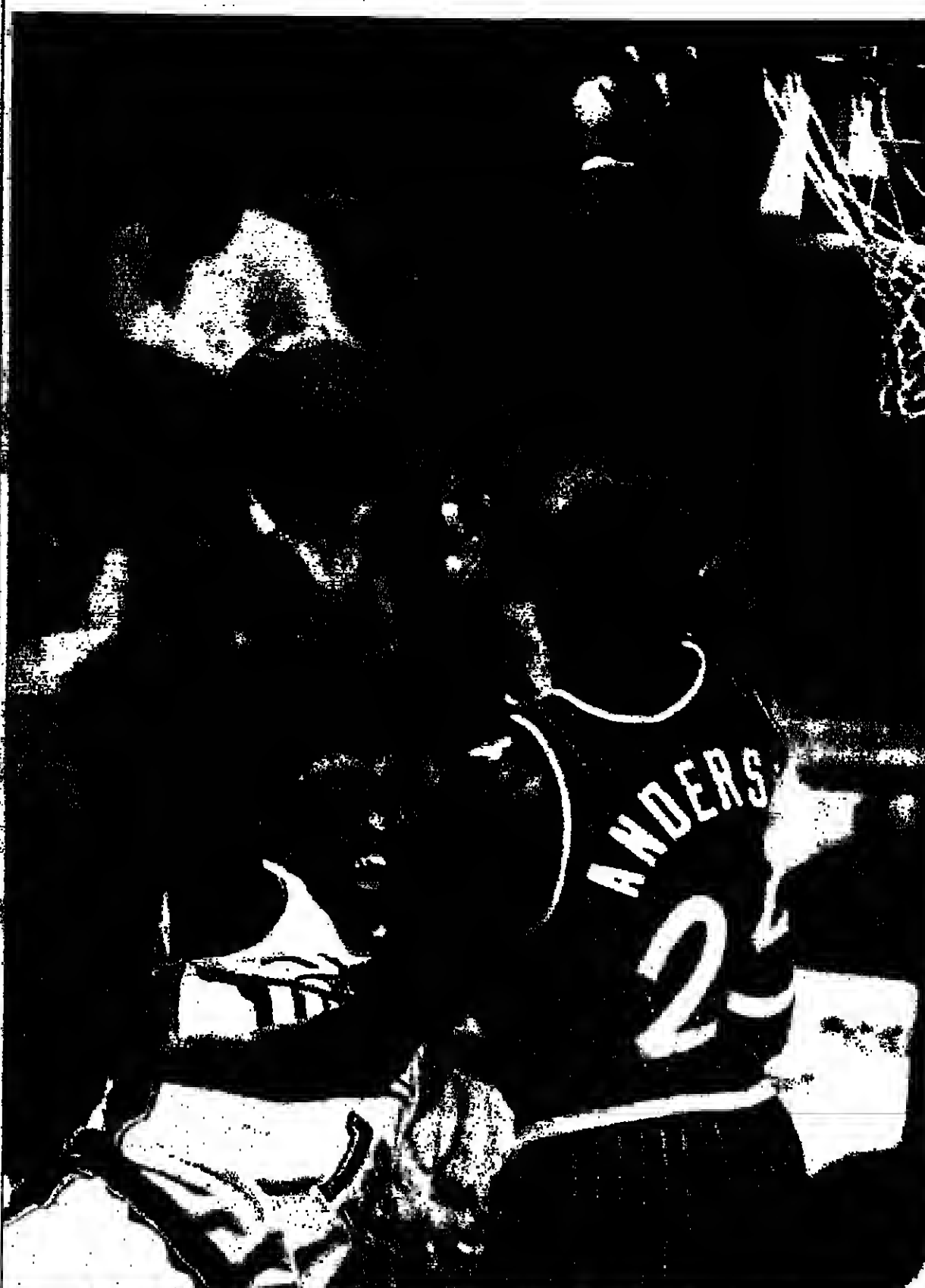
Williams said: "There is a great deal of money involved and when we opted out, there was no offer on the table. Nobody wants to be associated with the possible bankruptcy of one. No one could do it. It's a genuine, but there is more than one way to skin a cat."

Although Williams is characteristically cautious about his team's prospects of retaining their drivers' and constructors' championships this coming season, both expect Jacques Villeneuve to start with the edge over his new partner, Heinz-Harald Frentzen.

They are united, also, in taking little regard of Michael Schumacher's assertion that his Ferrari will not be a championship-winning car this year.

"He's always playing down his chances and I don't believe a word he says about that," Williams said.

# Magic man hampers Detroit's whizz



Nick Anderson of Orlando Magic tries to block a shot from Jerome Williams of the Detroit Pistons in their National Basketball Association game at Auburn Hills, Michigan. Detroit won 96-87. Photograph: John Hillery/Reuters

# Tuigamala set to leave Wigan

Rugby League

Wigan are resigned to losing their third major rugby union convert in 12 months, with Va'auga Tuigamala set to join Newcastle for £500,000. Jack Robinson, the Wigan chairman, met with the unsettled player yesterday and further talks are planned for today.

The Second Division union club want to complete the deal by next week to beat the Courage League signing deadline. Wigan, reported to be £3.3m in debt, sold Scott Quinnell to Richmond and Martin Offiah jointly to Bedford and London Broncos last summer, the savings on lucrative contracts being as important as the £600,000 transfer fees.

Tuigamala, 27, described his recent loan spell with Wigan as "a breath of fresh air" and a one-off appearance by the former All Black against Ireland for his native Western Samoa in Dublin reinforced his desire for international rugby once more.

He returned to Wigan at the weekend but fared poorly in the Challenge Cup defeat by St Helens. The Wigan operations

manager, David Bradshaw, said: "Inga has broader ambitions, encompassing international rugby, and we are hoping to be able to satisfy those dreams while he continues to play for Wigan."

"The chairman is due to have further talks with him tomorrow and we expect to resolve the situation one way or the other in the next 24 hours."

"If he is still adamant that he wants to fulfil his ambitions elsewhere, we will have to deal with that."

Wigan are desperate to halt their decline, having conceded the cup and Super League double to rivals St Helens, but financial concerns may dictate their thinking.

The Tuigamala deal is believed to be worth £1m, with Newcastle having to return the £180,000 Super League "loyalty" bonus and agree a three-year contract valued at around £300,000.

Wigan would use the money to keep the Great Britain winger Jason Robinson at Central Park. He is due to take up a contract with the Australian Rugby League at the end of June.

# Goulding banned

DAVE HADFIELD

The St Helens scrum-half and captain, Bobbie Goulding, has been hammered with an eight-game suspension that means that his club must try to reach Wembley without him.

Goulding was sent off during last Saturday's Silk Cut Challenge Cup fourth-round victory over Wigan at Knowsley Road for a high tackle on Neil Cowie. A disciplinary committee meeting in Leeds yesterday took a dim view of both the tackle and Goulding's previous record, hitting him with one of the heaviest bans imposed for foul play in recent times.

Saints are considering an appeal and Goulding himself could only say: "I'm devastated."

Should Saints reach Wembley, where they beat the Bradford Bulls to win the Cup last year, Goulding will not be clear to play until the week before the final.

His suspension also means that he will miss the early rounds of the Super League season, leaving Saints, who have no experienced specialist in the position with whom to replace him, in a real quandary.

Goulding this week withdrew a transfer request and said that he wanted to stay with Saints, but this ban means that he will be doing so in a non-playing capacity until the end of April.

A League sub-committee is today considering whether other players who joined the brawl after Goulding's tackle should also be punished.

The Batley prop, Steve Walker, has also been heavily punished for his sending-off in the tie against Paris St Germain. He has been suspended for six games. Castleford, another club knocked out of the Cup at the weekend, are planning two retaliations against Wigan before the start of the Super League season.

# Woods put in shade

Golf

Lucas Parsons equalled the course record with a nine under par 64 to snatch the spotlight from Tiger Woods in the first round of the Australian Masters in Melbourne yesterday.

Woods, who won the Bangkok Classic in Thailand on Sunday, his fourth tournament victory since turning professional last August, plundered the long holes at Huntingdale to finish five under par at 68 for a share of fifth place. The 21-year-old heavy-hitting American birdied all four par-fives on the par-73 course to the delight of a large gallery, even though he only used his driver once.

Parasailed by one from a fellow Australian, Peter O'Malley, after securing six birdies on the front nine before holing his second shot at the 13th for an eco-

two, the highlight of his round. His approach shot landed on the green and bounced about six feet beyond the flag but then spun back into the hole. The eagle helped Parsons to match the course record shared by another Australian, Mike Clayton, and Bernhard Langer.

Ronnie McCann, a South African-born American, took a two-stroke lead after the first round of the Dimension Data Pro-Am in Sun City yesterday, going round the Lost City course in a seven-under-par 65.

McCann's seven birdies put him two strokes clear of a group of nine players, including Zimbabwe's Nick Price and Italy's Wayne Retzer, and earning a place in today's quarter-finals of the Sun City Open.

The 31-year-old former Wimbledon champion then packed his rackets and prepared to return to London and his role as

# Cash has to take his chances after defeat

Tennis

JOHN ROBERTS reports from Dubai

Treating us to reminders of his sublime attacking style, Pat Cash came close, but not close enough, to eliminating the fourth seed, Wayne Ferreira, and earning a place in today's quarter-finals of the Sun Dubai Open.

In stark contrast, the European Ryder Cup captain Steve Ballmer lost his first outing of the year on his first round of the year on the European Tour.

orphan of the tour, in limbo between the current generation and the senior circuit, unsure where his next match was coming from.

Yesterday Cash saved five match points before losing to Ferreira, the 1995 champion, 3-6, 6-2, 7-5. The Australian, who was in Melbourne last month when the Australians were preparing to topple France, the holders, and is aggrieved at not being asked to hit with the squad.

"To say I'm being ignored by Tennis Australia and the people

who run the Davis Cup team would be an understatement," he said. "It's been that way pretty much since [John] Newcombe took over, but that's par for the course, so I'm not surprised."

Asked if he considered himself welcomed more by the tennis fraternity in Britain, his adoptive home, Cash said: "I do, yes, which is sad. I've been invited to hit with the British team and the British guys pretty much any time I want to, I've never been invited by Tennis Australia to do anything at all."

Asked if he sympathised with Cash, Ferreira said: "Any time he plays somebody else. I can't afford it when he plays me. I think he's lucky to be playing, and he should play to enjoy it, happy to be playing and not expecting too much."

Ferreira, unhappy with his own form even though he has helped South Africa reach the quarter-finals of the Davis Cup by defeating Russia in Durban last weekend, trailed Cash 0-5 after 18 minutes of the opening set before pulling his game together.

In the deciding set, Cash survived a fraught second game and then failed to convert any of four break points in the third game. Having saved the first match point with a stop volley at 4-5, Cash wasted two opportunities to crack Ferreira in the 11th game. Ferreira held for 5-6 when Cash mis-hit backhand across on game point. The Australian's tenacious defence forced Ferreira four more match points on the 12th game before a mis-hit high backhand volley ended his tournament.

916 locked up and then high-acted when he was on a flying high during the afternoon. He closed 1996 on 28,833,333 - over 0.75c below the American John Kohnke's ruling on his home circuit.

## SPORTING DIGEST

### Winning start for Australia

Cricket

Australia opened their tour of South Africa on a winning note, despite a brilliant 133 off 121 deliveries by Neil McKenzie yesterday.

The touring team beat a mixture of up-and-coming and retired players by 19 runs in a relaxed one-day game with no over limitations against the diamond-magnate Nicky Oppenheimer's Invitation XI at his private ground at Randfontein outside Johannesburg.

Australia were given a fine start of 124 by their openers, Matthew Hayden and Matthew Elliot. Hayden made 60 from 65 balls with five fours and two sixes, while Elliot hit 91 off 106 balls with four fours and four sixes.

Mark Taylor declared at 284 for 6, and Australia seemed well set for victory when the Invitation XI slipped to 114 for 5 after Paul Reiffel removed both openers, but McKenzie stole the individual batting honours, smashing 19 fours and a six to lift the Invitation XI to 265 all out.

**TODAY'S NUMBER**

**3.8m**

The anchor football fans who watched England's World Cup defeat by Italy in the quarter-final of their own home, a record for Sky TV, the station claims that viewers in pubs and clubs boosted the total figure to make their claim.

**American football**  
The British Athletic Federation has lost backing from Northern Ireland's Council for its world cross-country championships trials on 2 March and has scheduled the event from St Albans, near Ashington, to Luton.

**Athletics**  
The British Athletic Federation has lost backing from Northern Ireland's Council for its world cross-country championships trials on 2 March and has scheduled the event from St Albans, near Ashington, to Luton.

**Football**  
The British Athletic Federation has lost backing from Northern Ireland's Council for its world cross-country championships trials on 2 March and has scheduled the event from St Albans, near Ashington, to Luton.

**Cricket**  
Tim Munton, Warwickshire's new captain, has been awarded a benefit in 1998 as reward for helping the county to great success in his 12 years at Edgbaston.

**Baseball**  
The British Athletic Federation has lost backing from Northern Ireland's Council for its world cross-country championships trials on 2 March and has scheduled the event from St Albans, near Ashington, to Luton.

**Ice hockey**  
The British Athletic Federation has lost backing from Northern Ireland's Council for its world cross-country championships trials on 2 March and has scheduled the event from St Albans, near Ashington, to Luton.

**Rugby Union**  
The British Athletic Federation has lost backing from Northern Ireland's Council for its world cross-country championships trials on 2 March and has scheduled the event from St Albans, near Ashington, to Luton.

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**TODAY'S FIXTURES**

**FOOTBALL**  
7.30 UNITED SOFT  
NATIONAL FOOTBALL LEAGUE  
THIRD DIVISION  
Colchester v Chester (7.45)  
HAMP NATIONAL LEAGUE OF IRELAND  
Premier Division Bohemians v Cork City  
Dundalk v St Patrick's Athletic; Shamrock Rovers v Shelbourne.  
FENLICK: Shamrock v Southampton.

**Rugby Union**  
7.30 United States  
A INTERNATIONALS  
France A v Emerging Wales (8.30)  
(at Perpignan)  
A INTERNATIONAL A (2.30)  
(at Dourgnon/Ludlow)

**UNDER-21 INTERNATIONALS**  
France v Wales (8.15) (at St. Colombes, Paris); Ireland v England (8.15) (at Glaston); Ireland v England (8.15) (at Glaston); Ireland v England (8.15) (at Glaston).

**TOUR MATCHES**  
Bristol v North West Districts (8.45)  
ANGLA-WELSH Second Division  
Cardiff v Swansea (8.45)  
Cardiff v Swansea (8.45)  
Cardiff v Swansea (8.45)

**CLUB MATCHES**  
Bristol v North West Districts (8.45)  
ANGLA-WELSH Second Division  
Cardiff v Swansea (8.45)  
Cardiff v Swansea (8.45)  
Cardiff v Swansea (8.45)

**Baseball**  
Buckingham League: Birmingham Bats v Thames Valley Tigers (7.30).

**Other sports**  
SNOWKING International Open (Aberdeen).

**ON WEDNESDAY IT WAS THEM.**

Draw date: 12/2/97. The winning numbers: 6, 14, 23, 29, 38, 45. Bonus number: 47.  
Total Sales: £29,707,786. Prize Fund: £19,477,343 (45% of ticket sales plus £6,108,840 Superdraw funding).

CATEGORY	NO OF WINNERS	AMOUNT	GRAND TOTAL
Match 6 (Jackpot)	18	£555,556	£10,000,000
Match 5 plus bonus ball	33	£36,281	£1,197,273
Match 5	1,117	£669,000	£747,273
Match 4	38,301	£42	£1,608,842
Match 3	588,548	£10	£5,885,480
TOTALS	628,015		£19,477,343

Contributions to Good Causes: £8,500,000.

**IT COULD BE YOU! THE NATIONAL LOTTERY**

In the event of any discrepancy in the above, the data contained in Camelot central computer system shall prevail.



## Ashton great

How the Irish have taken to their new coach, page 26

## Sport

## Case for concern

Frank Williams' fears over Senna trial, page 27

## England must put in hard work



Glenn Moore says Glenn Hoddle undermined his World Cup campaign by making too many changes

It is the biggest word in the football lexicon, bigger than *catenaccio*, bigger than Niki Papavasiliou, the Cypriot who gave Newcastle's shirt-stenciller nightmares. The word is "if" and, like many a beaten manager, Glenn Hoddle was resorting to it in the aftermath of Wednesday night's defeat to Italy.

"If that had gone in, it would be a different story," he said in reference to Matt Le Tissier's wayward 41st-minute header. Morning glory? Definitely maybe.

Unfortunately for Hoddle the difference between taking and missing chances is usually what matters at this rarified level, as Gianfranco Zola showed. Not that Italy's finishing was quite as good as Hoddle suggested. "They had one shot at goal and it went in," he bemoaned. That overlooks one excellent save by Ian Walker from Zola, a bad miss by the Chelsea striker, and two opportunities wasted by Dino Baggio. Five clear chances – more than England, for all their huffing and puffing, snapshots and cheap shots, created all night. Pouch-drunk Angelo Peruzzi made England appear more dangerous than they were.

Hoddle sought to justify Le Tissier's inclusion by saying: "It is not a gamble when you feel the game is going to be tight and the door might need to be unlocked. Le Tissier, with his talent, could do that."

So why, if he is so sure of Le Tissier's ability, did he not play him earlier? As Scotland found on Tuesday night, even the lesser international defences need unpicking. Le Tissier and Shearer may have played together for Southampton but no one would have suspected it on the strength of their previous joint-outings with England, including a full 90 minutes against Romania in late 1994.

The pair were like strangers in the dark, exchanging barely a handful of passes all night. Hoddle admitted as much afterwards. Oddly, Shearer did attempt to find Le Tissier early in the second period when he would usually shoot. A waste, as Le Tissier was beaten to the ball.

That happened too often. His mental anticipation was as slow as his physical acceleration. Unused to the wiles and guiles of Italian defenders, he was beaten to the ball seven times and just as frequently balked. More unexpectedly his passing lost possession (10 times) as often as it retained it. True, he was

involved twice as often in an hour as Zola was in 90 minutes, but that reflected England's dominance of possession. Unlike Le Tissier, Zola overstepped, he was always running off the ball, or harrying defenders who were on it.

The Saint tried but an early incident betrayed him. A misunderstanding meant he misread a Graeme Le Saux pass down the line. Angelo Di Livio went to collect and Le Tissier's shoulders slumped. Then, as he turned to mouch upfield, he suddenly straightened, as if remembering an instruction, and rushed Di Livio. The Italian, surprised, cannoned his clearance into Le Tissier and was lucky to escape with a goal-kick. An admirable effort, but neither automatic nor often repeated. Perhaps if he played for a club where he was less indulged, it would be – he needs the example Gianluca Vialli would set.

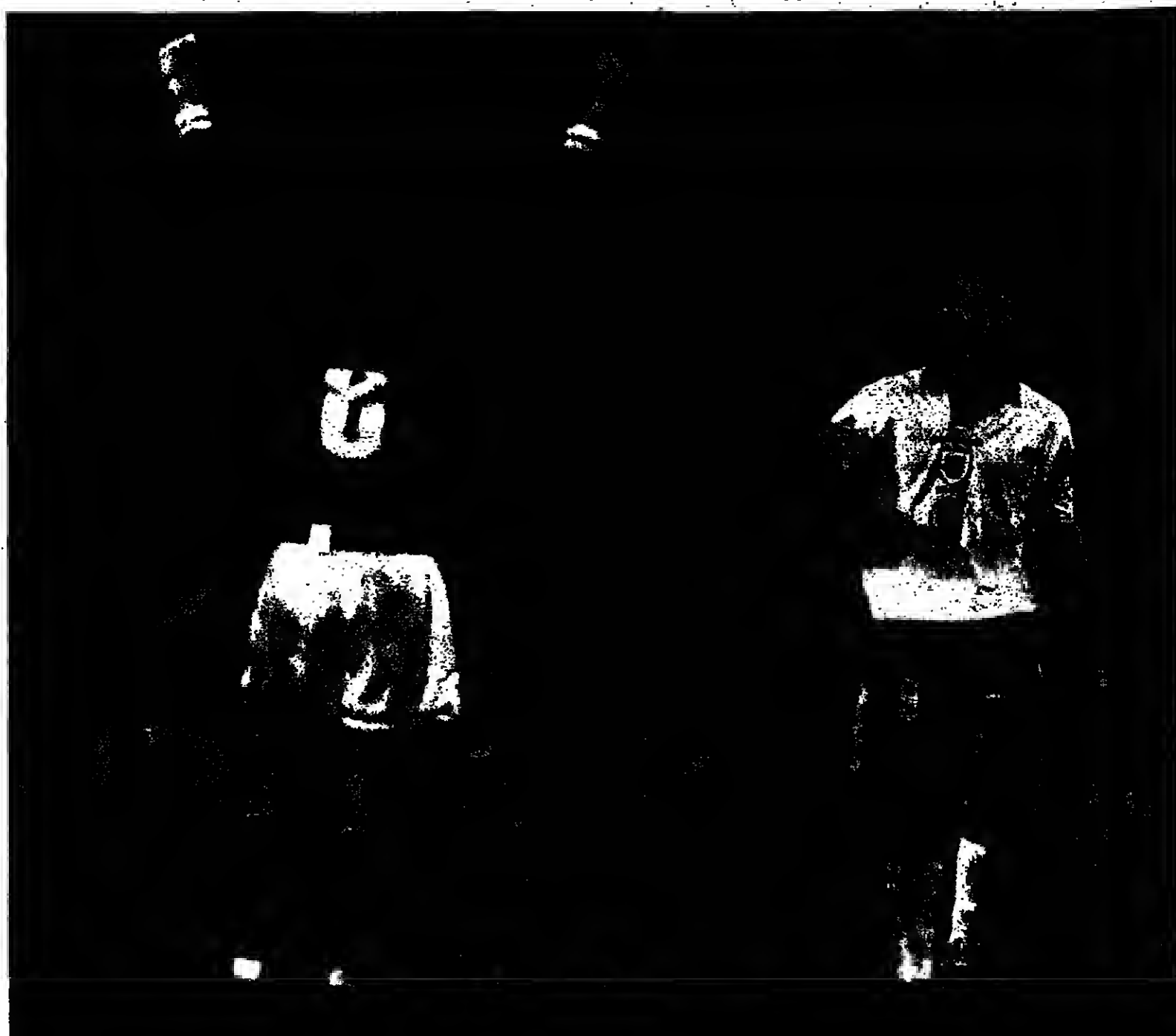
Italy worked like metronomes. Cesare Maldini had reason to be grateful for this undervalued legacy from Arrigo Sacchi: it led to the goal. It began with David Beckham midway in the Italian half. Pressed by Paolo Maldini, he passed to Gary Neville who, confronted by Pierluigi Casiraghi, moved the ball on to Sol Campbell. Zola closed him down and the ball went back, less accurately. Casiraghi, who had already cluttered Neville, rushed in and the defender had to hit hopefully forward. The ball was collected by Fabio Cannavaro and, nine unimpressed passes later, Alessandro Costacurta picked out Zola's run.

An exception? No. Remember Casiraghi forcing Ian Walker to hit a hurried second-half clearance? That led, 14 passes later, to Baggio running on to Demetrio Albertini's pass and chipping over. "Good players working hard," as George Graham once said of Milan, "that's their secret."

Apart from the virtues of hard work, which comes naturally to most English players, what else can be learned from Italy? Not to make too many changes, for one. Despite the ooh coo, their side had seven survivors from the one which drew with Germany in Euro96, England had four.

Injuries enforced several but the dropping of Gareth Southgate was curious. "I felt his fitness level had not recovered since his injury," Hoddle said.

The midfield four was solid but there was a lack of drive in



Alessandro Costacurta celebrates, Alan Shearer suffers as the final whistle blows at Wembley on Wednesday

Photograph: David Ashdown

the centre, with Le Tissier too static and McManaman easily shackled. It meant Shearer was left isolated. Les Ferdinand did not appear to be the answer, he was even less involved than Le Tissier and his arrival made England as predictable as Scotland were when lurching the ball at Duncan Ferguson.

Toddy Sheringham is injured and Nick Barry out of form but Merson, mobile, strong, quick to shoot and in rich form, should have played. Paul Gascoigne? England owed his guile, but has he the legs or the discipline?

It was England's first defeat in 36 home World Cup matches and their second defeat of any kind in 29 games. That the other loss was against Brazil, in June 1995, underlines England's continued failure to overcome the very best – against the leading quartet of Argentina, Brazil, Germany and Italy they have

only won once in 10 years and 16 matches (and only then because Stuart Pearce's goal-line handball against Brazil in 1990 was not spotted). Fortunately England have a better record against Poland, and will be defending a 24-year eight-game unbeaten record when they travel to Katowice in May for what has become a key game – simply to make sure of coming second in the group, and thus gaining, at least, a play-off place.

Before then, England must beat Moldova at home in April. First up is a friendly, against Mexico. While Hoddle is right to welcome a first chance at experimenting without risk, England are unlikely to derive much benefit. More interesting will be the antecedence, anything less than 40,000 will suggest Hoddle's honeymoon period is truly over.

World Cup results, page 26

## Italy full of pride and passion

Italy was a place full of pride yesterday – the day after their football team's 1-0 win over England in a World Cup qualifier at Wembley.

"Historic victory at Wembley," declared the *Tuttosport* daily newspaper. "Now we are the lions." Its headline "Zola, il genio, Italia si" (Zola, the genius, Italy is) seemed not translating. Gianfranco Zola, the diminutive Sardinian who scored Italy's winner and who is all too familiar to English fans as a Chelsea striker, was the toast of the nation.

"It's Zola, it's Italy," said the *Gazzetta dello Sport*, above a picture of the jubilant player twisting away from goal with a finger raised. "Wembley is ours."

The hard-fought win made Italy the first team to beat Eng-

land at home in a World Cup qualifier. Most Italians assumed a place in the 1998 finals was now assured.

The new coach, Cesare Maldini, received many tributes. "A victory Italian style," said *Tuttosport*. "Cesare Maldini, 24 years after Ferruccio Valcareggi, leads an Italian team in taking Wembley by storm." Italy have beaten England many times in the past but the only previous occasion they have done so in England was in November 1973, when they again won 1-0 at Wembley. That team was coached by Valcareggi, and the goal scored by Fabio Capello, now Real Madrid's coach.

Wednesday's win seemed to have released years of pent-up frustration among Italian fans.

"It was an heroic undertaking," said Luciano Nizzola, the newly-appointed head of the Italian football federation and the man who gave Maldini his job late last year.

After years of stinging criticism and lacklustre performances under Arrigo Sacchi, the cautious coach who led Italy to the 1994 World Cup final and yet whose team rarely produced entertaining football, the performance at Wembley proved cathartic.

The players were the same but a new spirit was detected in their performance. "It is as if the new national team, regaining its old memory, had wiped out in just 90 minutes all of the most recent displays under Sacchi," *Tuttosport* said.

## Rusedski ready to continue his climb

Tennis

Greg Rusedski continued his recent winning run with a comfortable straight-set victory over Alejandro Hernandez in the first round of the San Jose Open in California.

The British No. 2, who climbed 17 places from 56 to 73 in the ATP world rankings earlier this week after his appearance in the final of the Croatian indoor championship, was rarely troubled by his Mexican opponent and won 6-3, 6-4.

Further victories in California could see Rusedski, who is seeded No. 7 in San Jose, rise above his highest-ever world ranking of 33, which he achieved in January last year.

Rusedski later tasted further success in the first round of the doubles with his German playing partner, Alex Radulescu. They recorded a straight-set victory over Sweden's David Elert and the American Jeff Tarango, winning 7-5, 6-3.

Steffi Graf, who has been troubled by a knee injury, has withdrawn from next week's WTA tournament in Hanover and may also miss Germany's Fed Cup match against the Czech Republic next month.

"I very much regret that I can't play in Hanover, but I have to first allow the injury to heal completely," Graf said.

Graf, who has been forced to stop all training, had to withdraw from the Toray Pan Pacific Open two weeks ago because of a severely aggravated patella tendon of the left knee, at the bottom front of the kneecap. She saw her doctor in Heidelberg yesterday.

The knee problem first troubled Graf in June while she was preparing for Wimbledon. In October she was forced to withdraw in the semi-finals at Leipzig because of it.

The German's appearance in the Fed Cup match early next month depends on the results of another examination next week. A spokesman for Graf said: "What's important is that Steffi is completely healthy and can appear pain-free at further Grand Slam tournaments this year."

Britain is guaranteed a finalist in the LTA women's satellite event in Birmingham, with Shiri-Anne Siddall and Lucie Ahl meeting in the semi-finals today. In yesterday's quarter-finals Siddall thrashed Karen Cross 6-1, 6-2 and Ahl defeated the national junior champion, Louise Lathin, 6-4, 6-1. In the other semi-final Britain's Claire Taylor faced Tatiana Poutchek from Belarus.

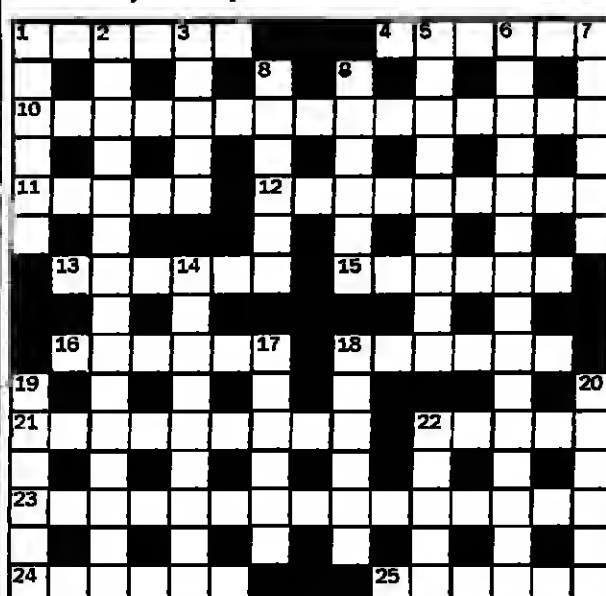
Dubai report, page 26

## THE INDEPENDENT CROSSWORD

No. 3222, Friday 14 February

By Phil

Thursday's Solution



BARBECUE SCOUT  
UO EN A  
COORCOUN GRIVAE  
NS ER HC U  
LITERATE PISTOL  
ES SH E A T E  
SI O U S E N S  
WINDFLOWER  
A V E R E I E A  
LIEGES SPANARD  
UN R E D S V  
QUINING FEMININE  
W O I E N  
SPRINGS PHASEOUT

- ACROSS**
- Hint recalled by her playing card-game (6)
  - Rank organised by military leader (6)
  - Telegraphic ear broadcast about political event (7, 8)
  - Interrogate old King badly (5)
  - Correspondent's enclosure taking a day to finish (9)
  - Song's expression of surprise about rejection of benefit (6)
  - King is imprisoning a Queen and Emperor (6)
  - Believe Church has little power in performance (6)
  - First to hide in dark-coloured boat... (6)
  - Usually at sea? (2, 3, 4)
  - Man getting rid of it or man holding on to it? (5)
  - Trendy place ahead of the rest, giving reasons for taking it easy (8, 3, 4)
- DOWN**
- One Biblical vessel found round about a place in Turkey (6)
  - Count Dracula's heart is after no end of gore (6)
  - English period provides interest (6)
  - Pain in the neck about name involved in surprising defection – but it's a bluff! (10, 5)
  - Country sport beginning to ruin a student (5)
  - There's agreement in taking in nothing from this instrument (9)
  - Source of garbled statements (in which see Press mislead) (7, 8)
  - Make bare or clothe? (6)
  - Being elusive is insolent (6)
  - Board having place for college scientist (6)

## Ashton pledges warm welcome for England

## Rugby Union

CHRIS HEWITT  
reports from Dublin

Brian Ashton's purist approach to rugby is beginning to rub off on the Irish. The eternal underdogs are not simply promising chaos when they go toe-to-toe with England in Dublin tomorrow, they are promising "rugby chaos".

At least, that is how they intend to start. "It would be remiss of us not to give England a traditional fire and fury welcome," grinned Ashton, four weeks into his post as Ireland's coaching adviser and enjoying every minute of it. By way of emphasis, his view was backed by Jim Staples, the captain. "I think we'll look to make the first few minutes a bit lively," he said.

Away from the role-playing, however, both Ashton and Staples were at pains to point out that Ireland were in a position

to play some serious rugby as well as play the mayhem card. Ashton said: "We've looked very closely at the England side – I know many of them quite intimately from my days at Bath and with two thirds of the Irish team playing their club rugby in the Courage League, the players know even more about their opponents than I do, but we have not paid them any greater attention than we paid the French or the Welsh. Quite honestly, I'm more interested in the rugby we bring to the table ourselves."

"We've seen two England teams of late: the one that struggled to beat Argentina before Christmas and the one that turned it on in the second half against the Scots a fortnight ago. On that occasion, they showed the rugby of which they are capable if you let them play, but I would say now that the Irish are well able to produce something of similar quality."

The Irish trained in Limerick yesterday and their entire squad

was given a clean bill of health. David Corkery, the blind-side flanker from Bristol, and Jonathan Bell, Northampton's gifted centre, both play tomorrow after recovering from hand and rib injuries respectively. Nick Poplewell, the most experienced forward in the home pack, has seen off a pulled hamstring and takes his place in the front row while Paddy Johns, the in-form lock from Saracens, showed no ill effects from a head wound suffered in training on Monday.

Wales will owe a huge debt to their centre Allan Bateman if they tear up the form book by beating France in Paris tomorrow. Bateman missed the defeat against Ireland, having undergone knee cartilage surgery and his absence confirmed just how much Wales need him.

"Allan's return has given us a great boost," the scrum-half, Robert Howley, said. "We missed his variation."

Price right in '75, page 26

## Prost acquires Ligier F1 team

## Motor racing

Alain Prost, France's former quadruple world champion, has bought the Formula One team, Ligier, after he agreed a contract with Peugeot to use its engines from 1998. The deal was struck after Eddie Jordan, whose team have a contract with Peugeot, gave up his agreement. The new set-up, which will be named after Prost, will be officially unveiled today.

Max Mosley, the head of the

sport's governing body, the FIA, and Bernie Ecclestone, the vice-chairman, were both keen to see the team line up on the grid for the first Grand Prix of the season in Australia in March.

The team will bear the name Prost-Mugen-Honda for the 1997 season until the Peugeot agreement begins at the start of the following year. However, Jordan, realising that a Ligier team headed by Prost, 41, would be a threat to a new contract with Peugeot, held out, despite all the other teams having

given their assent to Prost's acquisition, which required a unanimous vote for the change to go ahead.

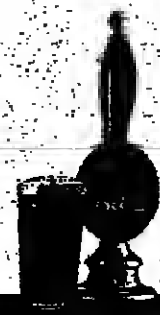
Prost's compatriot Olivier Panis, the winner of last season's Monaco Grand Prix, and Shinji Nakano, of Japan, will be the team's drivers next season.

Peugeot have supplied engines to Jordan for the past three years, gaining their best result when Rubens Barrichello, of Brazil, and Eddie Irvine finished second and third respectively in the 1995 Canadian Grand Prix.



Be mine tonight.

Be mine tonight.



PREMIUM HAND PULLED ALE SINCE 1775

er. con  
with  
The eye  
Gam  
The gangster  
Regime  
up with  
Liberty  
the crumbling  
regime, the  
Conservative  
Party and the  
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